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THE WORKS

OF

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING, D.D.

97774

INCLUDING HIS

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE;

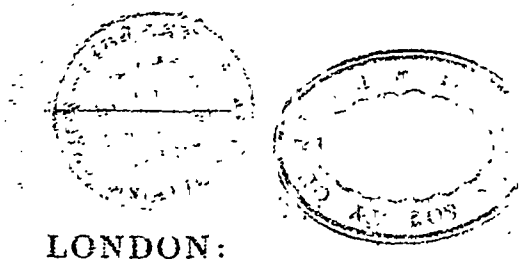
LIGHTS ON POWER AND GREATNESS;

REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER OF MILTON;

SERMONS;

AND

TWO PIECES NEVER HERETOFORE PUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY.



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SONNET TO DR. CHANNING.

From the "WINTER'S WREATH" for 1829.

YES! earth shall still be brighten'd with the rays,
Which virtuous hearts upon its darkness shed:
Freedom shall raise up her exulting head,
And point prophetic to the future days!
And thine, O Channing! be the patriot's praise,
Whose words of fire inflame the soul of youth
With Heaven's own spirit—honour, virtue, truth,
Th' immortal glory time shall not erase.
Proceed! while tyrants at thy page turn pale,
And unstain'd hearts throb warmer at its power;
Leave to posterity that noblest dower,
Thine own high mind—which future times shall hail;
And dwell enraptured on thy hope and trust,
When earth's oppressors lie forgotten in the dust.

J. E. R.

PREFACE.

THE Writings of Dr. Channing have already received the highest meed of approbation in this country, and are widely diffusing their genial influences for the mental and moral benefit of this and future generations.

Hitherto most of these works have been published in a small size; but a wish has been so often expressed for a larger, uniform edition, that the publisher could no longer defer offering them to the public in the present form.

Two of the following pieces are now printed, in this country, for the first time; namely, "Observations on the Proposition for Increasing the Means of Theological Education," and the "Discourse on the Ordination of the Rev. F. A. Farley;" the latter of which the publisher received from the highly gifted

Author only just in time for insertion. He doubts not that they will hold an equal rank with the preceding.

Of the subjects discussed or referred to in this volume, some may not inappropriately be described in the language of a great Poet of our own day:

" Of Truth, of Grandeur, Beauty, Love, and Hope;—
Of moral strength, and intellectual power;
Of Joy in widest commonalty spread;
Of the individual mind that keeps her own
Inviolate retirement, subject there
To Conscience only, and the law supreme
Of that Intelligence that governs all."

The importance and dignity of these and other topics of equal interest, so eloquently expatiated upon in the following pages, recommend them to the attention of every intelligent mind. Whatever strengthens the understanding, expands the affections, or enlarges the sphere of our sympathies; whatever makes us feel our relation to the universe " and all that it inherits"; to time, and to eternity; to the great and beneficent Cause of all,—must unquestionably refine our nature, and elevate us in the scale of being.

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ANALYSIS

OF

THE CHARACTER

OF

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,

SUGGESTED BY THE PUBLICATION OF

SCOTT'S LIFE OF NAPOLEON.

The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte by Sir Walter Scott has been anticipated with an eagerness, proportioned to the unrivalled power of the author, and to the wonderful endowments and fortunes of the hero. That the general expectation has been satisfied, we cannot affirm. But few will deny, that the writer has given us a monument of his great talents. The rapidity with which such a work has been thrown off astonishes us. We think, however, that the author owed to himself and to the public a more deliberate execution of this important undertaking. He should either have abandoned it, or have bestowed on it the long and patient labour which it required. The marks of negligence and haste, which are spread through the work, are serious blemishes, perhaps inexpiable defects. It wants compression and selection throughout. Many

passages are encumbered with verbiage. Many thoughts are weakened by useless expansion and worse than useless repetition. Comparisons are accumulated to excess, and whilst many are exquisite, perhaps as many are trite and unworthy of history. The remarks are generally just, but obvious, and we fear we must add, often superficial. We state these defects plainly, that we may express the more freely our admiration of the talents which have executed so rapidly a work so extensive and various, so rich in information, so fresh and vivid in description, and furnishing such abundant specimens of a free, graceful, and vigorous style.

The work has the great merit of impartiality. It is probably inaccurate in many of its details, but singularly free from prejudice and passion. Not a few, who considered that the author was both a Briton and a friend of the principles and policy of Pitt, were expecting from his pen a discoloured delineation of the implacable foe of England and of that great minister. But the rectitude of his mind, and his reverence for historical truth, have effectually preserved him from abusing the great power, conferred on him by his talents, over public opinion. We think that his laudable fear of wronging the enemy of his country, joined to an admiration of the dazzling qualities of Napoleon, has led him to soften unduly the crimes of his hero, and to give more favourable impressions than truth will warrant.

But enough of the author, who needs not our praise, and can suffer little by our censure. Our concern is with his subject. A just estimate of the late Emperor of France seems to us important. That extraordinary man, having operated on the world with unprecedented power during his life, is now influencing it by his character. That character we apprehend is not viewed as it should be. The kind of admiration which it inspires, even in free countries, is a bad omen. The greatest crime against society, that of spoiling it of its rights and loading it with chains, still fails to move that deep abhorrence, which is its due, and which if really felt, would fix on the usurper a brand of indelible infamy. Regarding freedom as the chief interest of human nature, as essential to its intellectual, moral, and religious progress, we look on men, who have signalized themselves by their hostility to it, with an indignation at once stern and sorrowful, which no glare of successful war, and no admiration of the crowd, can induce us to suppress. We mean then to speak freely of Napoleon. But if we know ourselves, we could on no account utter one unjust reproach. We speak the more freely, because conscious of exemption from every feeling like animosity. We war not with the dead. We would resist only what we deem the pernicious influence of the dead. We would devote ourselves to the cause of freedom and humanity, a cause perpetually betrayed by the admiration lavished on

prosperous crime and all-grasping ambition. Our great topic will be the Character of Napoleon; and with this we shall naturally intersperse reflections on the great interests which he perpetually influenced.

We begin with observing, that it is an act of justice to Bonaparte to remember, that he grew up under disastrous influences, in a troubled day, when men's minds were convulsed, old institutions overthrown, old opinions shaken, old restraints snapped asunder; when the authority of religion was spurned, and youth abandoned to unwonted licence; when the imagination was made feverish by visions of indistinct good, and the passions swelled by the sympathy of millions to a resistless torrent. A more dangerous school for the character cannot well be conceived. That All-seeing Being, who knows the trials of his creatures and the secrets of the heart, can alone judge to what degree crimes are extenuated by circumstances so inauspicious. This we must remember in reviewing the history of men, who were exposed to trials unknown to ourselves. But because the turpitude of an evil agent is diminished by infelicities of education or condition, we must not therefore confound the immutable distinctions of right and wrong, and withhold our reprobation from atrocities which have spread misery and slavery far and wide.

It is also due to Napoleon to observe, that there has always existed, and still exists, a mournful ob-

tuseness of moral feeling in regard to the crimes of military and political life. The wrong-doing of public men on a large scale, has never drawn upon them that sincere, hearty abhorrence which visits private vice. Nations have seemed to court aggression and bondage by their stupid insane admiration of successful tyrants. The wrongs, from which men have suffered most, in body and mind, are yet unpunished. True, Christianity has put into our lips censures on the aspiring and the usurping. But these reproaches are as yet little more than sounds, and unmeaning common-places. They are repeated for form's sake. When we read or hear them, we feel that they want depth and strength. They are not inward, solemn, burning convictions, breaking from the indignant soul with a tone of reality, before which guilt would cower. The true moral feeling in regard to the crimes of public men is almost to be created. We believe, then, that such a character as Bonaparte's is formed with very little consciousness of its turpitude; and society, which contributes so much to its growth, is responsible for its existence, and merits in part the misery which it spreads.

Of the early influences under which Bonaparte was formed, we know little. He was educated in a military school, and this, we apprehend, is not an institution to form much delicacy, or independence of moral feeling; for the young soldier is taught, as his first duty, to obey his superior without con-

sulting his conscience; to take human life at another's bidding; to perform that deed, which above all others requires deliberate conviction, without a moment's inquiry as to its justice; and to place himself a passive instrument in hands which, as all history teaches, often reek with blood causelessly shed.

His first political association was with the Jacobins, the most sanguinary of all the factions which raged in France, and whose sway is emphatically called 'the reign of terror.' The service which secured his command in Italy, was the turning of his artillery on the people, who, however dangerous when acting as a mob, happened in the present case to understand their rights, and were directing their violence against manifest usurpation.

His first campaign was in Italy, and we have still a vivid recollection of the almost rapturous admiration with which we followed his first triumphs; for then we were simple enough to regard him as the chosen guardian of liberty. His peculiar tactics were not then understood; the secret of his success had not reached us; and his rapid victories stimulated the imagination to invest him with the mysterious powers of a hero of romance. We confess that we cannot now read the history of his Italian w s without a quickened movement in the veins. The rapidity of his conceptions; the inexhaustibleness of his invention; the energy of his will; the decision which suffered not a moment's pause be-

tween the purpose and its execution; the presence of mind, which, amidst sudden reverses, and on the brink of ruin, devised the means of safety and success: these commanding attributes, added to a courage, which, however suspected afterwards, never faltered then, compel us to bestow, what indeed we have no desire to withhold, the admiration which is due to superior power.

Let not the friends of peace be offended. We have said, and we repeat it, that we have no desire to withhold our admiration from the energies which war often awakens. Great powers, even in their perversion, attest a glorious nature, and we may feel their grandeur, whilst we condemn with our whole strength of moral feeling, the evil passions by which they are depraved. We are willing to grant that war, abhor it as we may, often developes and places in strong light, a force of intellect and purpose, which raises our conceptions of the human soul. There is perhaps no moment in life, in which the mind is brought into such intense action, in which the will is so strenuous, and in which irrepressible excitement is so tempered with self-possession, as in the hour of battle. Still the greatness of the warrior is poor and low compared with the magnanimity of virtue. It vanishes before the greatness of principle. The martyr to humanity, to freedom, or to religion; the unshrinking adherent of despised and deserted truth; who alone, unsupported, and scorned, with no crowd to infuse

into him courage, no variety of objects to draw his thoughts from himself, no opportunity of effort or resistance to rouse and nourish energy, still yields himself calmly, resolutely, with invincible philanthropy, to bear prolonged and exquisite suffering, which one retracting word might remove: such a man is as superior to the warrior, as the tranquil and boundless heavens above us, to the low earth we tread beneath our feet.

We have spoken of the energies of mind called forth by war. If we may be allowed a short digression, which however, bears directly on our main subject, the merits of Napoleon, we would observe, that military talent, even of the highest order, is far from holding the first place among intellectual endowments. It is one of the lower forms of genius; for it is not conversant with the highest and richest objects of thought. We grant that a mind, which takes in a wide country at a glance, and understands almost by intuition the positions it affords for a successful campaign, is a comprehensive and vigorous one. The general, who disposes his forces so as to counteract a greater force; who supplies by skill, science, and genius, the want of numbers; who dives into the counsels of his enemy, and who gives unity, energy, and success to a vast sphere of operations, in the midst of casualties and obstructions which no wisdom could foresee, manifests great power. But still the chief work of a general is to apply physical force; to remove physical ob-

structions; to avail himself of physical aids and advantages; to act on matter; to overcome rivers, ramparts, mountains, and human muscles; and these are not the highest objects of mind, nor do they demand intelligence of the highest order; and accordingly nothing is more common than to find men, eminent in this department, who are almost wholly wanting in the noblest energies of the soul, in imagination and taste, in the capacity of enjoying works of genius, in large views of human nature, in the moral sciences, in the application of analysis and generalization to the human mind and to society, and in original conceptions on the great subjects which have absorbed the most glorious understandings. The office of a great general does not differ widely from that of a great mechanician, whose business it is to frame new combinations of physical forces, to adapt them to new circumstances, and to remove new obstructions. Accordingly great generals, away from the camp, are commonly no greater men than the mechanician taken from his workshop. In conversation they are often dull. Works of profound thinking on general and great topics they cannot comprehend. The conqueror of Napoleon, the hero of Waterloo, undoubtedly possesses great military talents, but we have never heard of his eloquence in the senate, or of his sagacity in the cabinet; and we venture to say, that he will leave the world, without adding one new thought on the great themes, on which

the genius of philosophy and legislature has meditated for ages. We will not go down for illustration to such men as Nelson, a man great on the deck, but debased by gross vices, and who never pretended to enlargement of intellect. To institute a comparison in point of talent and genius between such men and Milton, Bacon, and Shakspeare, is almost an insult to these illustrious names. Who can think of these truly great intelligences; of the range of their minds through heaven and earth; of their deep intuition into the soul; of their new and glowing combinations of thought; of the energy with which they grasped and subjected to their main purpose, the infinite materials of illustration which nature and life afford; who can think of the forms of transcendent beauty and grandeur which they created, or which were rather emanations of their own minds; of the calm wisdom and fervid impetuous imagination which they conjoined; of the dominion which they have exerted over so many generations, and which time only extends and makes sure; of the voice of power, in which, though dead, they still speak to nations, and awaken intellect, sensibility, and genius in both hemispheres; who can think of such men, and not feel the immense inferiority of the most gifted warrior, whose elements of thought are physical forces and physical obstructions, and whose employment is the combination of the lowest class of objects, on which a powerful mind can be employed?

We return to Napoleon. His splendid victories in Italy spread his name like lightning through the civilized world. Unhappily they emboldened him to those unprincipled and open aggressions, to the indulgence of that lawless, imperious spirit, which marked his after course, and kept pace with his growing power. In his victorious career, he soon came in contact with States, some of which, as Tuscany and Venice, had acknowledged the French Republic, whilst others, as Parma and Modena, had observed a strict neutrality. The old-fashioned laws of nations, under which such States would have found shelter, seemed never to have crossed the mind of the young victor. Not satisfied with violating the neutrality of all, he seized the port of Leghorn, and ruined the once flourishing commerce of Tuscany; and having exacted heavy tribute from Parma and Modena, he compelled these powers to surrender, what had hitherto been held sacred in the utmost extremities of war, some of their choicest pictures, the chief ornaments of their capitals. We are sometimes told of the good done by Napoleon to Italy. But we have heard his name pronounced as indignantly there as here. An Italian cannot forgive him for robbing that country of its noblest works of art, its dearest treasures and glories, which had made it a land of pilgrimage to men of taste and genius from the whole civilized world, and which had upheld and solaced its pride under conquest and humiliation. From this use of power in

the very dawn of his fortunes, it might easily have been foretold what part he would act in the stormy day which was approaching, when the sceptre of France and Europe was to be offered to any strong hand, which should be daring enough to grasp it.

Next to Italy, Egypt became the stage for the display of Napoleon; Egypt, a province of the Grand Signior, with whom France was in profound peace; and who, according to the long established relations of Europe, was her natural ally. It would seem, that this expedition was Bonaparte's own project. His motives are not very distinctly stated by his biographer. We doubt not that his great aim was conspicuousness. He chose a theatre where all eyes could be turned upon him. He saw that the time for usurpation had not yet come in France. To use his own language, the fruit was not yet ripe. He wanted a field of action which would draw upon him the gaze of the world, and from which he might return at the favourable moment for the prosecution of his enterprises at home. At the same time he undoubtedly admitted into his mind, which success had already intoxicated, some vague wild hope of making an impression on the Eastern world, which might place its destinies at his command, and give him a throne more enviable than Europe could bestow. His course in the East exhibited the same lawlessness, the same contempt of all restraints on his power, which we have already noted. No means which promised success,

were thought the worse for their guilt. It was not enough for him to boast of his triumphs over the Cross, or to profess Mahometanism. He claimed inspiration, and a commission from God, and was anxious to join the character of prophet to that of hero. This was the beginning of the great weaknesses and errors into which he was betrayed by that spirit of self-exaggeration, which under the influence of past success and of unbounded flattery, was already growing into a kind of insanity. In his own view he was fit to be a compeer with Mahomet. His greatness in his own eyes made him blind to the folly of urging his supernatural claims on the Turk, who contemned, even more than he abhorred, a Frank; and who would sooner have sold himself a slave to Christians, than have acknowledged a renegade Christian as a sharer of the glories of Mahomet. It was not enough for Bonaparte, on this expedition, to insult God, to show an impiety as foolish as it was daring. He proceeded to trample on the sentiments and dictates of humanity with equal hardihood. The massacre of Jaffa is universally known. Twelve hundred prisoners, and probably more, who had surrendered themselves to Napoleon, and were apparently admitted to quarter, were two days afterwards marched out of the fort, divided into small bodies, and then deliberately shot; and, in case the musket was not effectual, were dispatched by bayonets. This was an outrage, which cannot be sheltered by the laws

and usages of war, barbarous as they are. It was the deed of a bandit and savage, and ought to be execrated by good men, who value and would preserve the mitigations which Christianity has infused into the conduct of national hostilities.

The next great event in Bonaparte's history was the usurpation of the supreme power of the state, and the establishment of military despotism over France. On the particulars of this criminal act we have no desire to enlarge, nor are we anxious to ascertain, whether our hero, on this occasion, lost his courage and self-possession, as he is reported to have done. We are more anxious to express our convictions of the turpitude of this outrage on liberty and justice. For this crime, but one apology can be offered. Napoleon, it is said, seized the reins, when, had he let them slip, they would have fallen into other hands. He enslaved France at a moment, when, had he spared her, she would have found another tyrant. Admitting the truth of the plea, what is it but the reasoning of the highwayman, who robs and murders the traveller, because the booty was about to be seized by another hand, or because another dagger was ready to do the bloody deed? We are aware that the indignation with which we regard this crime of Napoleon, will find a response in few breasts; for to the multitude a throne is a temptation which no virtue can be expected to withstand. But moral truth is immoveable amidst the sophistry, ridicule, and abject

reasonings of men, and the time will come, when it will find a meet voice to give it utterance. Of all crimes against society, usurpation is the blackest. He who lifts a parricidal hand against his country's rights and freedom; who plants his foot on the necks of thirty millions of his fellow-creatures; who concentrates in his single hand the powers of a mighty empire, and who wields its powers, squanders its treasures, and pours forth its blood like water, to make other nations slaves and the world his prey; this man, as he unites all crimes in his sanguinary career, so he should be set apart by the human race for their unmingled and unmeasured abhorrence, and should bear on his guilty head a mark as opprobrious as that which the first murderer wore. We cannot think with patience of one man fastening chains on a whole people, and subjecting millions to his single will; of whole regions overshadowed by the tyranny of a frail being like ourselves. In anguish of spirit we exclaim, How long will an abject world kiss the foot which tramples it? How long shall crime find shelter in its very aggravations and excess?

Perhaps it may be said, that our indignation seems to light on Napoleon, not so much because he was a despot, as because he became a despot by usurpation; that we seem not to hate tyranny itself, so much as a particular mode of gaining it. We do indeed regard usurpation as a crime of peculiar blackness, especially when committed, as in

the case of Napoleon, in the name of liberty. All despotism, however, whether usurped or hereditary, is our abhorrence. We regard it as the most grievous wrong and insult to the human race. But towards the hereditary despot we have more of compassion than indignation. Nursed and brought up in delusion, worshipped from his cradle, never spoken to in the tone of fearless truth, taught to look on the great mass of his fellow beings as an inferior race, and to regard despotism as a law of nature and a necessary element of social life; such a prince, whose education and condition almost deny him the possibility of acquiring healthy moral feeling and manly virtue, must not be judged severely. Still, in absolving the despot from much of the guilt which seems at first to attach to his unlawful and abused power, we do not the less account despotism a wrong and a curse. The time for its fall, we trust, is coming. It cannot fall too soon. It has long enough wrung from the labourer his hard earnings; long enough squandered a nation's wealth on its parasites and minions; long enough warred against the freedom of the mind, and arrested the progress of truth. It has filled dungeons enough with the brave and good, and shed enough of the blood of patriots. Let its end come. It cannot come too soon.

We have now followed Bonaparte to the moment of possessing himself of the supreme power. Those who were associated with him in subverting the go-

vernment of the Directory, essayed to lay restraints on the First Consul, who was to take their place. But he indignantly repelled them. He held the sword, and with this, not only intimidated the selfish, but awed and silenced the patriotic, who saw too plainly that it could only be wrested from him by renewing the horrors of the revolution.—We now proceed to consider some of the means, by which he consolidated his power, and raised it into the imperial dignity. We consider these as much more important illustrations of his character than his successive campaigns, to which accordingly we shall give little attention.

One of his first measures for giving stability to his power, was certainly a wise one, and was obviously dictated by his situation and character. Having seized the first dignity in the state by military force, and leaning on a devoted soldiery, he was under no necessity of binding himself to any of the parties which had distracted the country—a vassalage to which his domineering spirit could ill have stooped. Policy and his love of mastery pointed out to him an indiscriminate employment of the leading men of all parties: and not a few of these had become so selfish and desperate in the disastrous progress of the revolution, that they were ready to break up old connexions, and to divide the spoils of the Republic with a master. Accordingly he adopted a system of comprehension and lenity, from which even the emigrants were not excluded,

and had the satisfaction of seeing almost the whole talent which the revolution had quickened, leagued in the execution of his plans. Under the able men whom he called to his aid, the finances and the war department, which had fallen into a confusion that threatened ruin to the state, were soon restored to order, and means and forces provided for retrieving the recent defeats and disgraces of the French armies.

This leads us to mention another most important and effectual means by which Napoleon secured and enlarged his power. We refer to the brilliant campaign immediately following his elevation to the Consulate, and which restored to France the ascendancy which she had lost during his absence. On his success at this juncture his future fortunes wholly depended. It was in this campaign that he proved himself the worthy rival of Hannibal. The energy which conducted an army with its cavalry, artillery, and supplies, across the Alps, by untried paths, which only the chamois hunter, born and bred amidst glaciers and everlasting snows, had trodden, gave the impression, which of all others he most desired to spread, of his superiority to nature, as well as to human opposition. This enterprise was in one view a fearful omen to Europe. It showed a power over the minds of his soldiers, the effects of which were not to be calculated. The conquest of St. Bernard by a French army was the boast of the nation; but a still more wonderful thing was, the capacity of the general to inspire into that army —

the intense force, confidence, resolution, and patience, by which alone the work could be accomplished. The victory of Marengo, gained by one of the accidents of war in the moment of apparent defeat and ruin, secured to Bonaparte the dominion which he coveted. France, who in her madness and folly had placed her happiness in conquest, now felt that the glory of her arms was safe only in the hands of the First Consul; whilst the soldiery, who held the sceptre in their gift, became more thoroughly satisfied, that triumph and spoils waited on his standard.

Another important and essential means of securing and building up his power, was the system of *espionage*, called the Police, which, under the Directory, had received a development worthy of those friends of freedom, but which was destined to be perfected by the wisdom of Napoleon. It would seem as if despotism, profiting by the experience of ages, had put forth her whole skill and resources in forming the French police, and had forged a weapon, never to be surpassed, for stifling the faintest breathings of disaffection, and chaining every free thought. This system of *espionage*, (we are proud that we have no English word for the infernal machine,) had indeed been used under all tyrannies. But it wanted the craft of Fouché, and the energy of Bonaparte, to disclose all its powers. In the language of our author, 'it spread through all the ramifications of society;' that is, every man, of the least

importance in the community, had the eye of a spy upon him. He was watched at home as well as abroad, in the boudoir and theatre, in the brothel and gaming-house; and these last-named haunts furnished not a few ministers of the Argus-eyed police. There was an ear open through all France to catch the whispers of discontent; a power of evil, which aimed to rival, in omnipresence and invisibleness, the benignant agency of the Deity. Of all instruments of tyranny, this is the most detestable: for it chills the freedom and warmth of social intercourse; locks up the heart; infects and darkens men's minds with mutual jealousies and fears; and reduces to system a wary dissimulation, subversive of force and manliness of character. We find, however, some consolation in learning that tyrants are the prey of distrust, as well as the people over whom they set this cruel guard; that tyrants cannot confide in their own spies, but must keep watch over the machinery which we have described, lest it recoil upon themselves. Bonaparte at the head of an army is a dazzling spectacle; but Bonaparte, heading a horde of spies, compelled to doubt and fear these base instruments of his power, compelled to divide them into bands, and to receive daily reports from each, so that by balancing them against each other, and sifting their testimony, he might gather the truth; Bonaparte, thus employed, is any thing but imposing. It requires no great elevation of thought to look down on such an occupation with

scorn; and we see, in the anxiety and degradation which it involves, the beginning of that retribution which tyranny cannot escape.

Another means by which the First Consul protected his power can excite no wonder. That he should fetter the press, should banish or imprison refractory editors, should subject the journals and more important works of literature to jealous superintendence,—these were things of course. Free writing and despotism are such implacable foes, that we hardly think of blaming a tyrant for keeping no terms with the press. He cannot do it. He might as reasonably choose a volcano for the foundation of his throne. Necessity is laid upon him, unless he is in love with ruin, to check the bold and honest expression of thought. But the necessity is his own choice; and let infamy be that man's portion, who seizes a power which he cannot sustain, but, by dooming the mind, through a vast empire, to slavery, and by turning the press, that great organ of truth, into an instrument of public delusion and debasement.

We pass to another means of removing obstructions to his power and ambition, still worse than the last. We refer to the terror which he spread by his severities, just before assuming the imperial power. The murder of the Duke d'Enghien was justified by Napoleon as a method of striking fear into the Bourbons, who, as he said, were plotting his death. This may have been one motive; for

we have reason to think that he was about that time threatened with assassination. But we believe still more, that he intended to awe into acquiescence the opposition, which, he knew, would be awakened in many breasts, by the prostration of the forms of the republic, and the open assumption of the imperial dignity. There were times when Bonaparte disclaimed the origination of the murder of the Duke d'Enghien. But no other could have originated it. It bears internal marks of its author. The boldness, decision, and overpowering rapidity of the crime, point unerringly to the soul where it was conceived. We believe that one great recommendation of this murder was, that it would strike amazement and terror into France and Europe, and show that he was prepared to shed any blood, and to sweep before him every obstruction in his way to absolute power. Certain it is, that the open murder of the Duke d'Enghien, and the justly suspected assassinations of Pichegru and Wright, did create a dread, such as had not been felt before; and whilst on previous occasions some faint breathings of liberty were to be heard in the legislative bodies, only one voice, that of Carnot, was raised against investing Bonaparte with the imperial crown, and laying France, an unprotected victim, at his feet.

There remain for our consideration other means employed by Bonaparte for building up and establishing his power, of a different character from those we have named, and which on this account

we cannot pass without notice. One of these was the Concordat which he extorted from the Pope, and which professed to re-establish the Catholic religion in France. Our religious prejudices have no influence on our judgement of this measure. We make no objections to it, as the restoration of a worship which on many accounts we condemn. We view it now simply as an instrument of policy, and in this light, it seems to us no proof of the sagacity of Bonaparte. It helps to confirm in us an impression, which other parts of his history give us, that he did not understand the peculiar character of his age, and the peculiar and original policy which it demanded. He always used common-place means of power, although the unprecedented times in which he lived, required a system, which should combine untried resources and touch new springs of action. Because old governments had found a convenient prop in religion, Napoleon imagined that it was a necessary appendage and support of his sway, and resolved to restore it. But at this moment there were no foundations in France for a religious establishment, which could give strength, and a character of sacredness to the supreme power. There was comparatively no faith, no devout feeling, and still more, no superstition to supply the place of these. The time for the reaction of the religious principle had not yet arrived; and a more likely means of retarding it could hardly have been devised, than the nursing care extended to the church

by Bonaparte, the recent Mussulman, the known despiser of the ancient faith, who had no worship at heart but the worship of himself. Instead of bringing religion to the aid of the state, it was impossible that such a man should touch it, without loosening the faint hold which it yet retained on the people. There were none so ignorant as to be the dupes of the First Consul in this particular. Every man, woman, and child knew that he was playing the part of a juggler. Not one religious association could be formed with his character or government. It was a striking proof of the self-exaggerating vanity of Bonaparte, and of his ignorance of the higher principles of human nature, that he not only hoped to revive and turn to his account the old religion, but imagined that he could, if necessary, have created a new one. 'Had the Pope never existed before, he should have been made for the occasion,' was the speech of this political charlatan; as if religious opinion and feeling were things to be manufactured by a consular decree! Ancient legislators, by adopting and sympathizing with popular and rooted superstitions, were able to press them into the service of their institutions. They were wise enough to build on a pre-existing faith, and studiously to conform to it. Bonaparte, in a country of infidelity and atheism, and whilst unable to refrain from sarcasms on the system which he patronized, was weak enough to believe that he might make it a substantial support of his govern-

ment. He undoubtedly congratulated himself on the terms which he exacted from the Pope, and which had never been conceded to the most powerful monarchs; forgetting that his apparent success was the defeat of his plans; for just as far as he severed the church from the supreme pontiff, and placed himself conspicuously at its head, he destroyed the only connexion which could give it influence. Just so far its power over opinion and conscience ceased. It became a coarse instrument of state, contemned by the people, and serving only to demonstrate the aspiring views of its master. Accordingly the French bishops in general refused to hold their dignities under this new head, preferred exile to the sacrifice of the rights of the church, and left behind them a hearty abhorrence of the Concordat among the more zealous members of their communion. Happy would it have been for Napoleon, had he left the Pope and the church to themselves. By occasionally recognizing and employing, and then insulting and degrading the Roman pontiff, he exasperated a large part of Christendom, fastened on himself the brand of impiety, and awakened a religious hatred, which contributed its full measure to his fall.

As another means employed by Bonaparte for giving strength and honour to his government, we may name the grandeur of his public works, which he began in his consulate, and continued after his accession to the imperial dignity. These dazzled

France, and still impress travellers with admiration. Could we separate these from his history, and did no other indication of his character survive, we should undoubtedly honour him with the title of a beneficent sovereign; but connected as they are, they do little or nothing to change our conceptions of him as an all-grasping, unprincipled usurper. Paris was the chief object of these labours; and surely we cannot wonder, that he who aimed at universal dominion, should strive to improve and adorn the metropolis of his empire. It is the practice of despots to be lavish of expense on the royal residence and the seat of government. Travellers in France, as in other countries of the continent, are struck and pained by the contrast between the magnificent capital and the mud-walled village, and uninteresting province. Bonaparte had a special motive for decorating Paris, for 'Paris is France,' as has often been observed; and in conciliating the vanity of the great city, he secured the obedience of the whole country. The boasted internal improvements of Napoleon scarcely deserve to be named, if we compare their influence with the operation of his public measures. The conscription, which drew from agriculture its most effective labourers, and his continental system, which sealed up every port and annihilated the commerce of his empire, drained and exhausted France to a degree, for which his artificial stimulants of industry, and his splendid projects afforded no compensation.

Perhaps the most admired of all his public works is the road over the Simplon, to which all travellers concur in giving the epithet, stupendous. But it ought not to amaze us, that he, who was aspiring at unlimited dominion, should establish communications between the different provinces of his empire. It ought not to amaze us, that he, who had scaled the glaciers of St. Bernard, should covet some easier passage for pouring his troops into Italy; nor is it very wonderful, that a sovereign, who commanded the revenues of Europe, and who lived in an age when civil engineering had been advanced to a perfection before unknown, should accomplish a bolder enterprise than his predecessors. We would add, that Napoleon must divide with Fabbroni the glory of the road over the Simplon; for the genius which contrived and constructed, is more properly its author, than the will which commanded it.

There is, however, one great work, which gives Bonaparte a fair claim on the gratitude of posterity, and entitles him to an honourable renown. We refer to the new code of laws, which was given to France under his auspices. His participation in this work has indeed been unwarrantably and ridiculously magnified. Because he attended the meetings of the commissioners to whom it was assigned, and made some useful and sagacious suggestions, he has been praised, as if he had struck out, by the miraculous force of his genius, a new code of laws.

The truth is, that he employed for this work, as he should have done, the most eminent civilians of the empire; and it is also true, that these learned men have little claim to originality; for, as our author observes, the code 'has few peculiarities making a difference betwixt its principles and those of the Roman law.' In other words, they preferred wisdom to novelty. Still Bonaparte deserves great praise for his interest in the work, for the impulse he gave to those to whom it was committed, and for the time and thought which, amidst the cares of a vast empire, he bestowed upon it. That his ambition incited him to this labour, we doubt not. He meant to entwine the laurels of Justinian with those of Alexander. But we will not quarrel with ambition, when it is wise enough to devote itself to the happiness of mankind. In the present case he showed that he understood something of true glory; and we prize the instance more, because it stands almost alone in his history. We look on the conqueror, the usurper, the spoiler of kingdoms, the insatiable despot, with disgust, and see in all these characters an essential vulgarness of mind. But when we regard him as a Fountain of Justice to a vast empire, we recognize in him a resemblance to the just and benignant Deity, and cheerfully accord to him the praise of bestowing on a nation one of the greatest gifts, and of the most important means of improvement and happiness, which it is permitted to man to confer. It was, however,

the misery of Bonaparte, a curse brought on him by his crimes, that he could touch nothing without leaving on it the polluting mark of despotism. His usurpation took from him the power of legislating with magnanimity, where his own interest was concerned. He could provide for the administration of justice between man and man, but not between the citizen and the ruler. Political offences, the very class which ought to be submitted to a jury, were denied that mode of trial. Juries might decide on other criminal questions; but they were not to be permitted to interpose between the despot and the ill-fated subjects who might fall under his suspicion. These were arraigned before 'special tribunals, invested with a half military character,' the ready ministers of nefarious prosecutions, and only intended to cloak by legal forms the murderous purpose of the tyrant.

We have thus considered some of the means by which Bonaparte consolidated and extended his power. We now see him advanced to that imperial throne, on which he had long fixed his eager eye. We see France now awed and now dazzled by the influence we have described, and at last surrendering, by public, deliberate acts, without a struggle or a show of opposition, her rights, liberties, interests, and power to an absolute master and to his posterity for ever. Thus perished the name and forms of the Republic. Thus perished the hopes of philanthropy. The air, which a few years ago resounded

with the shouts of a great people casting away their chains, and claiming their birthright of freedom, now rung with the servile cries of long life to a blood-stained usurper. There were indeed generous spirits, true patriots, like our own La Fayette, still left in France. But few, and scattered, they were left to shed in secret the tears of sorrowful and indignant despair. By this base and disastrous issue of their revolution, the French nation not only renounced their own rights, but brought reproach on the cause of freedom, which years cannot wash away. This is to us a more painful recollection than all the desolations which France spread through Europe, and than her own bitter sufferings when the hour of retribution came upon her. The fields which she laid waste are again waving with harvest; and the groans which broke forth through her cities and villages, when her bravest sons perished by thousands and ten thousands on the snows of Russia, have died away, and her wasted population is renewed. But the wounds which she inflicted on freedom, by the crimes perpetrated in that sacred name, and by the abject spirit with which that sacred cause was deserted, are still fresh and bleeding. France not only subjected herself to a tyrant, but what is worse, she has given tyranny every where new pleas and arguments, and emboldened it to preach openly, in the face of heaven, the impious doctrines of absolute power and unconditional submission.

Napoleon was now Emperor of France; and a

man unacquainted with human nature, would think that such an empire, whose bounds now extended to the Rhine, might have satisfied even an ambitious man. But Bonaparte obeyed that law of progress, to which the highest minds are peculiarly subjected; and acquisition inflamed, instead of appeasing the spirit of dominion. He had long proposed to himself the conquest of Europe, of the world; and the title of Emperor added intenseness to this purpose. Did we not fear that by repetition we might impair the conviction which we are most anxious to impress, we would enlarge on the enormity of the guilt involved in the project of universal empire. Napoleon knew distinctly the price which he must pay for the eminence which he coveted. He knew that the path to it lay over wounded and slaughtered millions, over putrefying heaps of his fellow-creatures, over ravaged fields, smoking ruins, pillaged cities. He knew that his steps would be followed by the groans of widowed mothers and famished orphans; of bereaved friendship and despairing love; and that in addition to this amount of misery, he would create an equal amount of crime, by multiplying indefinitely the instruments and participators of his rapine and fraud. He knew the price, and resolved to pay it. But we do not insist on a topic which few, very few as yet, understand or feel. Turning then for the present from the moral aspect of this enterprise, we will view it in another light, which is of great importance to a just estimate of

his claims on admiration. We will inquire into the nature and fitness of the measures and policy which he adopted for compassing the subjugation of Europe and the world.

We are aware that this discussion may expose us to the charge of great presumption. It may be said that men, having no access to the secrets of cabinets, and no participation in public affairs, are not the best judges of the policy of such a man as Napoleon. This we are not anxious to disprove, nor shall we quarrel with our readers for questioning the soundness of our opinions. But we will say, that though distant, we have not been indifferent observers of the great events of our age, and that though conscious of exposure to many errors, we have a strong persuasion of the substantial correctness of our views. We express then, without reserve, our belief that the policy of Napoleon was wanting in sagacity, and that he proved himself incapable, as we before suggested, of understanding the character and answering the demands of his age. His system was a repetition of old means, when the state of the world was new. The sword and the police, which had sufficed him for enslaving France, were not the only powers required for his designs against the human race. Other resources were to be discovered or created; and the genius for calling them forth did not, we conceive, belong to Napoleon.

The circumstances under which Napoleon aspired

to universal empire differed in many respects from those under which former conquerors were placed. It was easy for Rome, when she had subdued kingdoms, to reduce them to provinces and to govern them by force; for nations at that period were bound together by no tie. They had little communication with each other. Differences of origin, of religion, of manners, of language, of modes of warfare; differences aggravated by long and ferocious wars, and by the general want of civilization,—prevented joint action, and almost all concern for one another's fate. Modern Europe, on the other hand, was an assemblage of civilized states, closely connected by commerce, by literature, by a common faith, by interchange of thoughts and improvements, and by a policy which had for ages proposed, as its chief object, the establishment of such a balance of power as would secure national independence. Under these influences, the human mind had made great progress; and in truth the French revolution had resulted from an unprecedented excitement and development of men's faculties, and from the extension of power and intelligence through a vastly wider class than had participated in them at any former period. The very power which Napoleon was wielding, might be traced to an enthusiasm essentially generous, and manifesting a tendency of the civilized world to better institutions. It is plain that the old plans of conquest, and the maxims of comparatively barbarous ages,

did not suit such a state of society. An ambitious man was to make his way by allying himself with the new movements and excitements of the world. The existence of a vast maritime power like England, which by its command of the ocean and its extensive commerce, was brought into contact with every community, and which at the same time enjoyed the enviable pre-eminence of possessing the freest institutions in Europe, was of itself a sufficient motive for a great modification of the policy, by which one state was now to be placed at the head of the nations. The peculiar character and influence of England, Bonaparte seemed indeed never able to comprehend; and the violent measures by which he essayed to tear asunder the old connections of that country with the continent, only gave them strength, by adding to the ties of interest, those of sympathy, of common suffering, and common danger.

Force and corruption were the great engines of Napoleon, and he plied them without disguise or reserve, not caring how far he insulted, and armed against himself, the moral and national feelings of Europe. His great reliance was on the military spirit and energy of the French people. To make France a nation of soldiers was the first and main instrument of his policy; and here he was successful. The revolution indeed had in no small degree done this work to his hands. To complete it, he introduced a national system of education, having

for its plain end to train the whole youth of France to a military life, to familiarize the mind to this destination from its earliest years, and to associate the idea of glory almost exclusively with arms. The conscription gave full efficacy to this system; for as every young man in the empire had reason to anticipate a summons to the army, the first object in education naturally was, to fit him for the field. The public honours bestowed on military talent, and a rigorous impartiality in awarding promotion to merit, so that no origin, however obscure, was a bar to what were deemed the highest honours of Europe, kindled the ambition of the whole people into a flame, and directed it exclusively to the camp. It is true, the conscription, which thinned so terribly the ranks of her youth, and spread anxiety and bereavement through all her dwellings, was severely felt in France. But Napoleon knew the race whom it was his business to manage; and by the glare of victory, and the title of the Grand Empire, he succeeded in reconciling them for a time to the most painful domestic privations, and to an unexampled waste of life. Thus he secured, what he accounted the most important instrument of dominion, a great military force. But, on the other hand, the stimulants which for this purpose he was forced to apply perpetually to French vanity, the ostentation with which the invincible power of France was trumpeted to the world, and the haughty, vaunting style which became the most

striking characteristic of that intoxicated people, were perpetual irritations of the national spirit and pride of Europe, and implanted a deep hatred towards the new and insulting empire, which waited but for a favourable moment to repay with interest the debt of humiliation.

The condition of Europe forbade, as we believe, the establishment of universal monarchy by mere physical force. The sword, however important, was now to play but a secondary part. The true course for Napoleon seems to us to have been indicated, not only by the state of Europe, but by the means which France in the beginning of her revolution had found most effectual. He should have identified himself with some great interests, opinion, or institutions, by which he might have bound to himself a large party in every nation. He should have contrived to make at least a specious cause against all old establishments. To contrast himself most strikingly and most advantageously with former governments, should have been the key of his policy. He should have placed himself at the head of a new order of things, which should have worn the face of an improvement of the social state. Nor did the subversion of republican forms prevent his adoption of this course, or of some other which would have secured to him the sympathy of multitudes. He might still have drawn some broad lines between his own administration and that of other states, tending to throw the old dynasties into the

shade. He might have cast away all the pageantry and forms of courts, distinguished himself by the simplicity of his establishments, and exaggerated the relief which he gave to his people, by saving them the burdens of a wasteful and luxurious court. He might have insisted on the great benefits that had accrued to France from the establishment of uniform laws, which protected alike all classes of men; and he might have virtually pledged himself to the subversion of the feudal inequalities which still disfigured Europe. He might have insisted on the favourable changes to be introduced into property, by abolishing the entails which fettered it, the rights of primogeniture, and the exclusive privileges of a haughty aristocracy. He might have found abuses enough against which to array himself as a champion. By becoming the head of new institutions, which would have involved the transfer of power into new hands, and would have offered to the people a real improvement, he might every where have summoned to his standard the bold and enterprising, and might have disarmed the national prejudices to which he fell a prey. Revolution was still the true instrument of power. In a word, Napoleon lived at a period, when he could only establish a durable and universal control through principles and institutions of some kind or other, to which he would seem to be devoted.

It was impossible, however, for such a man as Napoleon to adopt, perhaps to conceive, a system

such as has now been traced; for it was wholly at war with that egotistical, self-relying, self-exaggerating principle, which was the most striking feature of his mind. He imagined himself able, not only to conquer nations, but to hold them together by the awe and admiration which his own character would inspire; and this bond he preferred to every other. An indirect sway, a control of nations by means of institutions, principles, or prejudices, of which he was to be only the apostle and defender, was utterly inconsistent with that vehemence of will, that passion for astonishing mankind, and that persuasion of his own invincibleness, which were his master feelings, and which made force his darling instrument of dominion. He chose to be the great, palpable, and sole bond of his empire; to have his image reflected from every establishment; to be the centre in which every ray of glory should meet, and from which every impulse should be propagated. In consequence of this egotism, he never dreamed of adapting himself to the moral condition of the world. The sword was his chosen weapon, and he used it without disguise. He insulted nations as well as sovereigns. He did not attempt to gild their chains, or to fit the yoke gently to their necks. The excess of his extortions, the audacity of his claims, and the insolent language in which Europe was spoken of as the vassal of the great empire, discovered that he expected to reign, not only without linking himself with the interests,

prejudices, and national feelings of men, but by setting all at defiance.

It would be easy to point out a multitude of instances in which he sacrificed the only policy by which he could prevail, to the persuasion that his own greatness could more than balance whatever opposition his violence might awaken. In an age in which Christianity was exerting some power, there was certainly a degree of deference due to the moral convictions of society. But Napoleon thought himself more than a match for the moral instincts and sentiments of our nature. He thought himself able to cover the most atrocious deeds by the splendour of his name, and even to extort applause for crimes by the brilliancy of his success. He took no pains to conciliate esteem. In his own eyes he was mightier than conscience; and thus he turned against himself the power and resentment of virtue in every breast where that divine principle yet found a home.

Through the same blinding egotism, he was anxious to fill the thrones of Europe with men bearing his own name, and to multiply every where images of himself. Instead of placing over conquered countries efficient men, taken from themselves, who, by upholding better institutions, would carry with them large masses of the people, and who would still, by their hostility to the old dynasties, link their fortunes with his own, he placed over nations such men as Jerome and Murat. He

thus spread a jealousy of his power, whilst he rendered it insecure; for as none of the princes of his creation, however well disposed, were allowed to identify themselves with their subjects, and to take root in the public heart, but were compelled to act openly and without disguise, as satellites and prefects of the French emperor; they gained no hold on their subjects, and could bring no strength to their master in his hour of peril. In none of his arrangements did Napoleon think of securing to his cause the attachment of nations. Astonishment, awe, and force were his weapons, and his own great name the chosen pillar of his throne.

So far was Bonaparte from magnifying the contrast and distinctions between himself and the old dynasties of Europe, and from attaching men to himself by new principles and institutions, that he had the great weakness, for so we view it, to revive the old forms of monarchy, and to ape the manners of the old court, and thus to connect himself with the herd of legitimate sovereigns. This was not only to rob his government of that imposing character which might have been given to it, and of that interest which it might have inspired, as an improvement on former institutions, but was to become competitor in a race in which he could not but be distanced. He could indeed pluck crowns from the heads of monarchs; but he could not by any means infuse their blood into his veins, associate with himself the ideas which are attached to

a long line of ancestry, or give to his court the grace of manners which belongs to older establishments. His true policy was, to throw contempt on distinctions which he could not rival; and had he possessed the genius and spirit of the founder of a new era, he would have substituted for a crown, and for other long worn badges of power, a new and simple style of grandeur, and new insignia of dignity, more consonant with an enlightened age, and worthy of one who disdained to be a vulgar king. By the policy which he adopted, if it be worthy of that name, he became a vulgar king, and showed a mind incapable of answering the wants and demands of his age. It is well known, that the progress of intelligence had done much in Europe to weaken men's reverence for pageantry and show. Nobles had learned to lay aside their trappings in ordinary life, and to appear as gentlemen. Even royalty had begun to retrench its pomp; and in the face of all this improvement, Bonaparte stooped from his height to study costumes, to legislate about court-dresses and court-manners, and to outshine his brother monarchs in their own line. He desired to add the glory of master of ceremonies to that of conqueror of nations. In his anxiety to belong to the caste of kings, he exacted scrupulously the observance and etiquette with which they are approached. Not satisfied with this approximation to the old sovereigns, with whom he had no common interest, and from whom he

could not have removed himself too far, he sought to ally himself by marriage with the royal families in Europe, to engraft himself and his posterity on an old imperial tree. This was the very way to turn back opinion into its old channels; to carry back Europe to its old prejudices; to facilitate the restoration of its old order; to preach up legitimacy; to crush every hope that he was to work a beneficent change among nations. It may seem strange that his egotism did not preserve him from the imitation of antiquated monarchy. But his egotism, though excessive, was not lofty, nor was it seconded by a genius, rich and inventive, except in war.

We have now followed Napoleon to the height of his power, and given our views of the policy by which he hoped to make that power perpetual and unbounded. His fall is easily explained. It had its origin in that spirit of self-reliance and self-exaggeration, of which we have seen so many proofs. It began in Spain. That country was a province in reality. He wanted to make it one in name; to place over it a Bonaparte; to make it a more striking manifestation of his power. For this purpose, he 'kidnapped' its royal family, stirred up the unconquerable spirit of its people, and after shedding on its plains and mountains the best blood of France, lost it for ever. Next came his expedition against Russia, an expedition against which his wisest counsellors remonstrated, but which had

every recommendation to a man who regarded himself as an exception to his race, and able to triumph over the laws of Nature. So insane were his self-confidence and impatience of opposition, that he drove, by his outrages, Sweden, the old ally of France, into the arms of Russia, at the very moment that he was about to throw himself into the heart of that mighty empire. On his Russian campaign we have no desire to enlarge. Of all the mournful pages of history, none are more sad than that which records the retreat of the French army from Moscow. We remember that when the intelligence of Napoleon's discomfiture in Russia first reached this country, we were among those who exulted in it, thinking only of the results. But when subsequent and minuter accounts brought distinctly before our eyes that unequalled army of France, broken, famished, slaughtered, seeking shelter under snowdrifts, and perishing by intense cold, we looked back on our joy with almost a consciousness of guilt, and expiated by a sincere grief our insensibility to the sufferings of our fellow-creatures. We understand that many interesting notices of Napoleon, as he appeared in this disastrous campaign, are given in the Memoirs of Count Segur—a book from which we have been repelled by the sorrows and miseries which it details. We can conceive few subjects more worthy of Shakspeare than the mind of Napoleon, at this moment, when his fate was sealed; when the tide of his victories was

suddenly stopped and rolled backwards; when his dreams of invincibleness were broken as by a peal of thunder; when the word which had awed nations, died away on the bleak waste, a powerless sound; and when he, whose spirit Europe could not bound, fled in fear from a captive's doom. The shock must have been tremendous to a mind so imperious, scornful, and unschooled to humiliation. The intense agony of that moment when he gave the unusual orders, to retreat; the desolateness of his soul, when he saw his brave soldiers and his chosen guards sinking in the snows, and perishing in crowds around him; his unwillingness to receive the details of his losses, lest self-possession should fail him; the levity and badinage of his interview with the Abbé de Pradt at Warsaw, discovering a mind labouring to throw off an insupportable weight, wrestling with itself, struggling against misery; and, though last not least, his unconquerable purpose still clinging to lost empire as the only good of life;—these workings of such a spirit would have furnished to the great dramatist a theme worthy of his transcendent powers.

By the irretrievable disasters of the Russian campaign, the empire of the world was effectually placed beyond the grasp of Napoleon. The tide of conquest had ebbed, never to return. The spell which had bound the nations was dissolved. He was no longer the Invincible. The weight of military power, which had kept down the spirit of nations,

was removed, and their long smothered sense of wrong and insult broke forth like the fires of a volcano. Bonaparte might still perhaps have secured the throne of France; but that of Europe was gone. This, however, he did not, could not, would not understand. He had connected with himself too obstinately the character of the world's master, to be able to relinquish it. Amidst the dark omens which gathered round him, he still saw in his past wonderful escapes, and in his own exaggerated energies, the means of rebuilding his fallen power. Accordingly the thought of abandoning his pretensions does not seem to have crossed his mind, and his irreparable defeat was only a summons to new exertion. We doubt, indeed, whether Napoleon, if he could have understood fully his condition, would have adopted a different course. Though despairing, he would probably have raised new armies, and fought to the last. To a mind which has placed its whole happiness in having no equal, the thought of descending to the level even of kings, is intolerable. Napoleon's mind had been stretched by such ideas of universal empire, that France, though reaching from the Rhine to the Alps, seemed narrow to him. He could not be shut up in it. Accordingly, as his fortunes darkened, we see no signs of relenting. He could not wear, he said, 'a tarnished crown,' that is, a crown no brighter than those of Austria and Russia. He continued to use a master's tone. He showed no

change but such as opposition works in the obstinate. He lost his temper, and grew sour. He heaped reproaches on his marshals, and the legislative body. He insulted Metternich, the statesman, on whom, above all others, his fate depended. He irritated Murat by sarcasms, which rankled within him, and accelerated, if they did not determine, his desertion of his master. It is a striking example of retribution, that the very vehemence and sternness of his will, which had borne him onward to dominion, now drove him to the rejection of terms which would have left him a formidable power, and thus made his ruin entire. Refusing to take counsel of events, he persevered in fighting with a stubbornness which reminds us of a spoiled child, who sullenly grasps what he knows he must relinquish, struggles without hope, and does not give over resistance, until his little fingers are one by one unclenched from the object on which he has set his heart. Thus fell Napoleon. We shall follow his history no further. His retreat to Elba, his irruption into France, his signal overthrow, and his banishment to St. Helena, though they add to the romance of his history, throw no new light on his character, and would of course contribute nothing to our present object. There are indeed incidents in this portion of his life which are somewhat inconsistent with the firmness and conscious superiority which belonged to him. But a man, into whose character so much impulse, and so little

principle entered, must not be expected to preserve unblemished, in such hard reverses, the dignity and self-respect of an emperor and a hero.

In the course of these remarks, our views of the Conqueror, of the First Consul, and of the Emperor, have been given plainly and freely. The subject, however, is so important and interesting, that we have thought it worth our while, though at the hazard of some repetition, to bring together in a narrower compass what seem to us the great leading features of the intellectual and moral character of Napoleon Bonaparte.

His intellect was distinguished by rapidity of thought. He understood by a glance what most men, and superior men, could learn only by study. He darted to a conclusion rather by intuition than reasoning. In war, which was the only subject of which he was master, he seized in an instant on the great points of his own and his enemy's positions; and combined at once the movements by which an overpowering force might be thrown with unexpected fury on a vulnerable part of the hostile line, and the fate of an army be decided in a day. He understood war as a science; but his mind was too bold, rapid, and irrepressible, to be enslaved by the technics of his profession. He found the old armies fighting by rule, and he discovered the true characteristic of genius, which, without despising rules, knows when and how to break them. He under-

stood thoroughly the immense moral power which is gained by originality and rapidity of operation. He astonished and paralysed his enemies by his unforeseen and impetuous assaults, by the suddenness with which the storm of battle burst upon them; and whilst giving to his soldiers the advantages of modern discipline, breathed into them by his quick and decisive movements, the enthusiasm of ruder ages. This power of disheartening the foe, and of spreading through his own ranks a confidence, and exhilarating courage, which made war a pastime, and seemed to make victory sure, distinguished Napoleon in an age of uncommon military talent, and was one main instrument of his future power.

The wonderful effects of that rapidity of thought by which Bonaparte was marked, the signal success of his new mode of warfare, and the almost incredible speed with which his fame was spread through nations, had no small agency in fixing his character, and determining for a period the fate of empires. These stirring influences infused a new consciousness of his own might. They gave intensity and audacity to his ambition; gave form and substance to his indefinite visions of glory, and raised his fiery hopes to empire. The burst of admiration, which his early career called forth, must in particular have had an influence in imparting to his ambition that modification by which it was characterized, and which contributed alike to its success and to its fall. He began with *astonishing* the world, with produ-

cing a sudden and universal *sensation*, such as modern times had not witnessed. To *astonish* as well as to sway by his energies, became the great aim of his life. Henceforth to rule was not enough for Bonaparte. He wanted to amaze, to dazzle, to overpower men's souls, by striking, bold, magnificent, and unanticipated results. To govern ever so absolutely would not have satisfied him, if he must have governed silently. He wanted to reign through wonder and awe, by the grandeur and terror of his name, by displays of power which would rivet on him every eye, and make him the theme of every tongue. Power was his supreme object; but a power which should be gazed at as well as felt, which should strike men as a prodigy, which should shake old thrones as an earthquake, and, by the suddenness of its new creations, should awaken something of the submissive wonder which miraculous agency inspires.

Such seems to us to have been the distinction or characteristic modification of his love of fame. It was a diseased passion for a kind of admiration, which, from the principles of our nature, cannot be enduring, and which demands for its support perpetual and more stimulating novelty. Mere esteem he would have scorned. Calm admiration, though universal and enduring, would have been insipid. He wanted to electrify and overwhelm. He lived for effect. The world was his theatre, and he cared little what part he played, if he might walk the sole

hero on the stage, and call forth bursts of applause which would silence all other fame. In war, the triumphs which he coveted were those in which he seemed to sweep away his foes like a whirlwind; and the immense and unparalleled sacrifice of his own soldiers, in the rapid marches and daring assaults to which he owed his victories, in no degree diminished their worth to the victor. In peace he delighted to hurry through his dominions; to multiply himself by his rapid movements; to gather at a glance the capacities of improvement which every important place possessed; to suggest plans which would startle by their originality and vastness; to project in an instant works which a life could not accomplish, and to leave behind the impression of a superhuman energy.

Our sketch of Bonaparte would be imperfect indeed, if we did not add that he was characterized by nothing more strongly than by the spirit of *self-exaggeration*. The singular energy of his intellect and will, through which he had mastered so many rivals and foes, and overcome what seemed insuperable obstacles, inspired a consciousness of being something more than man. His strong original tendencies to pride and self-exaltation, fed and pampered by strange success and unbounded applause, swelled into an almost insane conviction of superhuman greatness. In his own view, he stood apart from other men. He was not to be measured by the standard of humanity. He was not to be re-

tarded by difficulties to which all others yielded. He was not to be subjected to laws and obligations which all others were expected to obey. Nature and the human will were to bend to his power. He was the child and favourite of fortune; and if not the lord, the chief object of destiny. His history shows a spirit of self-exaggeration, unrivalled in enlightened ages, and which reminds us of an Oriental king to whom incense had been burnt from his birth as to a deity. This was the chief source of his crimes. He wanted the sentiment of a common nature with his fellow beings. He had no sympathies with his race. That feeling of brotherhood, which is developed in truly great souls with peculiar energy, and through which they give up themselves willing victims, joyful sacrifices, to the interests of mankind, was wholly unknown to him. His heart, amidst all its wild beatings, never had one throb of disinterested love. The ties which bind man to man he broke asunder. The proper happiness of a man, which consists in the victory of moral energy and social affection over the selfish passions, he cast away for the lonely joy of a despot. With powers which might have made him a glorious representative and minister of the beneficent Divinity, and with natural sensibilities which might have been exalted into sublime virtues, he chose to separate himself from his kind, to forego their love, esteem, and gratitude, that he might become their gaze, their fear, their wonder; and for this selfish,

solitary good, parted with peace and imperishable renown.

This insolent exaltation of himself above the race to which he belonged, broke out in the beginning of his career. His first success in Italy gave him the tone of a master, and he never laid it aside to his last hour. One can hardly help being struck with the *natural* manner with which he arrogates supremacy in his conversation and proclamations. We never feel as if he were putting on a lordly air, or borrowing an imperious tone. In his proudest claims, he speaks from his own mind, and in native language. His style is swollen, but never strained, as if he were conscious of playing a part above his real claims. Even when he was foolish and impious enough to arrogate miraculous powers and a mission from God, his language showed that he thought there was something in his character and exploits to give a colour to his blasphemous pretensions. The empire of the world seemed to him to be in a measure his due, for nothing short of it corresponded with his conceptions of himself; and he did not use mere verbiage, but spoke a language to which he gave some credit, when he called his successive conquests 'the fulfilment of his destiny.'

This spirit of self-exaggeration wrought its own misery, and drew down upon him terrible punishments; and this it did by vitiating and perverting his high powers. First, it diseased his fine intellect, gave imagination the ascendancy over judgement

turned the inventiveness and fruitfulness of his mind into rash, impatient, restless energies, and thus precipitated him into projects, which, as the wisdom of his counsellors pronounced, were fraught with ruin. To a man whose vanity took him out of the rank of human beings, no foundation for reasoning was left. All things seemed possible. His genius and his fortune were not to be bounded by the barriers which experience had assigned to human powers. Ordinary rules did not apply to him. His imagination, disordered by his egotism, and by unbounded flattery, leaped over appalling obstacles to the prize which inflamed his ambition. He even found excitement and motives in obstacles, before which other men would have wavered; for these would enhance the glory of triumph, and give a new thrill to the admiration of the world. Accordingly he again and again plunged into the depths of an enemy's country, and staked his whole fortune and power on a single battle. To be rash was indeed the necessary result of his self-exalting and self-relying spirit; for to dare what no other man would dare, to accomplish what no other man would attempt, was the very way to display himself as a superior being in his own and others' eyes. To be impatient and restless was another necessary issue of the attributes we have described. The calmness of wisdom was denied him. He, who was next to omnipotent in his own eyes, and who delighted to strike and astonish by sudden and conspicuous

operations, could not brook delay, or wait for the slow operations of time. A work, which was to be gradually matured by the joint agency of various causes, could not suit a man who wanted to be felt as the great, perhaps only cause; who wished to stamp his own agency in the most glaring characters on whatever he performed; and who hoped to rival by a sudden energy the steady and progressive works of nature. Hence so many of his projects were never completed, or only announced. They swelled however the tide of flattery, which ascribed to him the completion of what was not yet begun, whilst his restless spirit, rushing to new enterprises, forgot its pledges, and left the promised prodigies of his creative genius to exist only in the records of adulation. Thus the rapid and inventive intellect of Bonaparte was depraved, and failed to achieve a growing and durable greatness, through his self-exaggerating spirit. It reared indeed a vast and imposing structure, but disproportioned, disjointed, without strength, without foundations. One strong blast was enough to shake and shatter it, nor could his genius uphold it. Happy would it have been for his fame had he been buried in its ruins.

One of the striking properties of Bonaparte's character was decision, and this, as we have already seen, was perverted, by the spirit of self-exaggeration, into an inflexible stubbornness, which counsel could not enlighten, nor circumstances bend. Having taken the first step, he pressed onward

His purpose he wished others to regard as a law of nature, or a decree of destiny. It *must* be accomplished. Resistance but strengthened it; and so often had resistance been overborne, that he felt as if his unconquerable will, joined to his matchless intellect, could vanquish all things. On such a mind the warnings of human wisdom and of Providence were spent in vain; and the Man of Destiny lived to teach others, if not himself, the weakness and folly of that all-defying decision, which arrays the purposes of a mortal with the immutableness of the counsels of the Most High.

A still more fatal influence of the spirit of self-exaggeration which characterized Bonaparte, remains to be named. It depraved to an extraordinary degree his moral sense. It did not obliterate altogether the ideas of duty, but, by a singular perversion, it impelled him to apply them exclusively to others. It never seemed to enter his thought, that he was subject to the great obligations of morality, which all others are called to respect. He was an exempted being. Whatever stood in his way to empire, he was privileged to remove. Treaties only bound his enemies. No nation had rights but his own France. He claimed a monopoly in perfidy and violence. He was not naturally cruel; but when human life obstructed his progress, it was a lawful prey, and murder and assassination occasioned as little compunction as war. The most luminous exposition of his moral code was given

in his counsels to the king of Holland: 'Never forget, that in the situation to which my political system and the interests of my empire have called you, your first duty is towards ME, your second towards France. All your other duties, even those towards the people whom I have called you to govern, rank after these.' To his own mind he was the source and centre of duty. He was too peculiar and exalted to be touched by that vulgar stain called guilt. Crimes ceased to be such when perpetrated by himself. Accordingly he always speaks of his transgressions as of indifferent acts. He never imagined that they tarnished his glory, or diminished his claim on the homage of the world. In St. Helena, though talking perpetually of himself, and often reviewing his guilty career, we are not aware that a single word of compunction escapes him. He speaks of his life as calmly as if it had been consecrated to duty and beneficence, whilst in the same breath he has the audacity to reproach unsparingly the faithlessness of almost every individual and nation with whom he had been connected. We doubt whether history furnishes so striking an example of the moral blindness and obduracy to which an unbounded egotism exposes and abandons the mind.

His spirit of self-exaggeration was seen in his openness to adulation. Policy indeed prompted him to put his praises into the mouths of the venal slaves who administered his despotism. But flat-

tery would not have been permitted to swell into exaggerations, now nauseous, now ludicrous, and now impious, if, in the bosom of the chief, there had not lodged a flatterer who sounded a louder note of praise than all around him. He was remarkably sensitive to opinion, and resented as a wrong the suppression of his praises. The press of all countries was watched, and free states were called upon to curb it for daring to take liberties with his name. Even in books published in France on general topics, he expected a recognition of his authority. Works of talent were suppressed, when their authors refused to offer incense at the new shrine. He wished indeed to stamp his name on the literature, as on the legislation, policy, warfare of his age, and to compel genius, whose pages survive statues, columns, and empires, to take a place among his tributaries.

We close our view of Bonaparte's character, by saying, that his original propensities, released from restraint, and pampered by indulgence, to a degree seldom allowed to mortals, grew up into a spirit of despotism as stern and absolute as ever usurped the human heart. The love of power and supremacy absorbed, consumed him. No other passion, no domestic attachment, no private friendship, no love of pleasure, no relish for letters or the arts, no human sympathy, no human weakness, divided his mind with the passion for dominion and for dazzling manifestations of his power. Be-

fore this, duty, honour, love, humanity fell prostrate. Josephine, we are told, was dear to him; but the devoted wife, who had stood firm and faithful in the day of his doubtful fortunes, was cast off in his prosperity, to make room for a stranger, who might be more subservient to his power. He was affectionate, we are told, to his brothers and mother; but his brothers, the moment they ceased to be his tools, were disgraced; and his mother, it is said, was not allowed to sit in the presence of her imperial son*. He was sometimes softened, we are informed, by the sight of the field of battle strown with the wounded and dead. But if the Moloch of his ambition claimed new heaps of slain to-morrow, it was never denied. With all his sensibility, he gave millions to the sword, with as little compunction as he would have brushed away so many insects, which had infested his march. To him, all human will, desire, power, were to bend. His superiority, none might question. He insulted the fallen, who had contracted the guilt of opposing his progress; and not even woman's loveliness, and the dignity of a queen, could give shelter from his contumely. His allies were his vassals; nor was their vassalage concealed. Too lofty to use the arts of conciliation, preferring command to persuasion, overbearing, and all-grasping, he spread

* See 'America,' p. 57. We should not give this very unamiable trait of Napoleon's domestic character, but on authority which we cannot question.

distrust, exasperation, fear, and revenge through Europe; and when the day of retribution came, the old antipathies and mutual jealousies of nations were swallowed up in one burning purpose to prostrate the common tyrant, the universal foe.

Such was Napoleon Bonaparte. But some will say, he was still a great man. This we mean not to deny. But we would have it understood, that there are various kinds or orders of greatness, and that the highest did not belong to Bonaparte. There are different orders of greatness. Among these, the first rank is unquestionably due to *moral* greatness, or magnanimity; to that sublime energy by which the soul, subdued by the love of virtue, binds itself, indissolubly, for life and for death, to truth and duty; espouses as its own the interests of human nature; scorns all meanness, and defies all peril; hears in its own conscience a voice louder than threatenings and thunders; withstands all the powers of the universe, which would sever it from the cause of freedom, virtue, and religion; reposes an unfaultering trust in God in the darkest hour, and is ever 'ready to be offered up' on the altar of its country or of mankind. Of this moral greatness, which throws all other forms of greatness into obscurity, we see not a trace or spark in Napoleon. Though clothed with the power of a God, the thought of consecrating himself to the introduction of a new and higher era, to the exaltation of the character and condition of his race, seems never to

have dawned on his mind. The spirit of disinterestedness and self-sacrifice appears not to have waged a moment's war with self-will and ambition. His ruling passions, indeed, were singularly at variance with magnanimity. Moral greatness has too much simplicity, is too unostentatious, too self-subsistent, and enters into others' interests with too much heartiness, to live a day for what Napoleon always lived, to make itself the theme, and gaze, and wonder of a dazzled world. Next to moral, comes *intellectual* greatness, or genius in the highest sense of that word; and by this we mean that sublime capacity of thought, through which the soul, smitten with the love of the true and the beautiful, essays to comprehend the universe, soars into the heavens, penetrates the earth, penetrates itself, questions the past, anticipates the future, traces out the general and all-comprehending laws of nature, binds together, by innumerable affinities and relations, all the objects of its knowledge, and, not satisfied with what exists and with what is finite, frames to itself ideal excellence, loveliness, and grandeur. This is the greatness which belongs to philosophers, inspired poets, and to the master spirits in the fine arts. Next comes the greatness of *action*; and by this we mean the sublime power of conceiving and executing bold and extensive plans; of constructing and bringing to bear on a mighty object, a complicated machinery of means, energies, and arrangements, and of accomplishing great outward

effects. To this head belongs the greatness of Bonaparte; and that he possessed it, we need not prove, and none will be hardy enough to deny. A man, who raised himself from obscurity to a throne, who changed the face of the world, who made himself felt through powerful and civilized nations, who sent the terror of his name across seas and oceans, whose will was pronounced and feared as destiny, whose donatives were crowns, whose antechamber was thronged by submissive princes, who broke down the awful barrier of the Alps and made them a highway, and whose fame was spread beyond the boundaries of civilization to the steppes of the Cossack, and the deserts of the Arab;—a man, who has left this record of himself in history, has taken out of our hands the question, whether he shall be called great. All must concede to him a sublime power of action, an energy equal to great effects.

We are not disposed, however, to consider him as preeminent even in this order of greatness. War was his chief sphere. He gained his ascendancy in Europe by the sword. But war is not the field for the highest active talent; and Napoleon, we suspect, was conscious of this truth. The glory of being the greatest general of his age, would not have satisfied him. He would have scorned to take his place by the side of Marlborough or Turenne. It was as the founder of an empire, which threatened for a time to comprehend the world, and which demanded other talents besides that of war, that he

challenged unrivalled fame. And here we question his claim. Here we cannot award him supremacy. The project of universal empire, however imposing, was not original. The revolutionary governments of France had adopted it before; nor can we consider it as a sure indication of greatness, when we remember that the weak and vain mind of Louis XIV. was large enough to cherish it. The question is, did Napoleon bring to this design the capacity of advancing it by bold and original conceptions, adapted to an age of civilization, and of singular intellectual and moral excitement? Did he discover new foundations of power? Did he frame new bonds of union for subjugated nations? Did he discover, or originate, some common interests by which his empire might be held together? Did he breathe a spirit which should supplant the old national attachments, or did he invent any substitutes for those vulgar instruments of force and corruption, which any and every usurper would have used? Never in the records of time, did the world furnish such materials to work with, such means of modelling nations afresh, of building up a new power, of introducing a new era, as did Europe at the period of the French revolution. Never was the human mind so capable of new impulses. And did Napoleon prove himself equal to the condition of the world? Do we detect one original conception in his means of universal empire? Did he seize on the enthusiasm of his age, that powerful principle, more efficient than arms or

policy, and bend it to his purpose? What did he do but follow the beaten track? but apply force and fraud in their very coarsest forms? Napoleon showed a vulgar mind, when he assumed self-interest as the sole spring of human action. With the sword in one hand and bribes in the other, he imagined himself absolute master of the human mind. The strength of moral, national, and domestic feeling, he could not comprehend. The finest, and, after all, the most powerful elements in human nature, hardly entered into his conceptions of it; and how then could he have established a durable power over the human race? We want little more to show his want of originality and comprehensiveness as the founder of an empire, than the simple fact, that he chose as his chief counsellors Talleyrand and Fouché, names which speak for themselves. We may judge of the greatness of the master spirit, from the minds which he found most congenial with his own. In war, Bonaparte was great; for he was bold, original, and creative. Beyond the camp he indeed showed talent, but not superior to that of other eminent men.

There have been two circumstances, which have done much to disarm or weaken the strong moral reprobation with which Bonaparte ought to have been regarded, and which we deem worthy of notice. We refer to the wrongs which he is supposed to have suffered at St. Helena, and to the unworthy use which the Allied Powers have made of their tri-

umph over Napoleon. First, his supposed wrongs at St. Helena have excited a sympathy in his behalf, which has thrown a veil over his crimes. We are not disposed to deny that an unwarrantable, because unnecessary severity was exercised towards Bonaparte. We deem it not very creditable to the British government, that it tortured a sensitive captive by refusing him a title which he had long worn. We think that not only religion and humanity, but self-respect forbids us to inflict a single useless pang on a fallen foe. But we should be weak, indeed, if the moral judgements and feelings, with which Napoleon's career ought to be reviewed, should give place to sympathy with the sufferings by which it was closed. With regard to the scruples, which not a few have expressed as to the right of banishing him to St. Helena, we can only say, that our consciences are not yet refined to such exquisite delicacy, as to be at all sensitive on this particular. We admire nothing more in Bonaparte than the effrontery with which he claimed protection from the laws of nations. That a man who had set these laws at open defiance, should fly to them for shelter; that the oppressor of the world should claim its sympathy as an oppressed man, and that his claim should find advocates;—these things are to be set down among the extraordinary events of this extraordinary age. Truly, the human race is in a pitiable state. It may be trampled on, spoiled, loaded like a beast of burden, made the prey of rapacity, insolence, and the sword;

but it must not touch a hair, or disturb the pillow of one of its oppressors, unless it can find chapter and verse in the code of national law, to authorize its rudeness towards the privileged offender. For ourselves, we should rejoice to see every tyrant, whether a usurper or hereditary prince, fastened to a lonely rock in the ocean. Whoever gives clear, undoubted proof, that he is prepared and sternly resolved to make the earth a slaughterhouse, and to crush every will adverse to his own, ought to be caged like a wild beast: and to require mankind to proceed against him according to written laws and precedents, as if he were a private citizen in a quiet court of justice, is just as rational as to require a man, in imminent peril from an assassin, to wait and prosecute his murderer according to the most protracted forms of law. There are great solemn rights of nature, which precede laws, and on which law is founded. There are great exigences in human affairs which speak for themselves, and need no precedent to teach the right path. There are awful periods in the history of our race, which do not belong to its ordinary state, and which are not to be governed and judged by ordinary rules. Such a period was that, when Bonaparte, by infraction of solemn engagements, had thrown himself into France, and convulsed all Europe; and they who confound this with the ordinary events of history, and see in Bonaparte but an ordinary foe to the

peace and independence of nations, have certainly very different intellects from our own.

We confess, too, that we are not only unable to see the wrong done to Napoleon in sending him to St. Helena, but that we cannot muster up much sympathy for the inconveniences and privations which he endured there. Our sympathies, in this particular, are wayward and untractable. When we would carry them to that solitary island, and fasten them on the illustrious victim of British cruelty, they will not tarry there, but take their flight across the Mediterranean to Jaffa, and across the Atlantic to the platform where the Duke d'Enghien was shot, to the prison of Toussaint, and to the fields of battle where thousands at his bidding lay weltering in blood. When we strive to fix our thoughts upon the sufferings of the injured hero, other and more terrible sufferings, of which he was the cause, rush upon us: and his complaints, however loud and angry, are drowned by groans and execrations which fill our ears from every region which he traversed. We have no tears to spare for fallen greatness, when that greatness was founded in crime, and reared by force and perfidy. We reserve them for those on whose ruin it rose. We keep our sympathies for our race, for human nature in its humbler forms, for the impoverished peasant, the widowed mother, the violated virgin; and are even perverse enough to rejoice, that the ocean has a prison-house, where

the author of those miseries may be safely lodged. Bonaparte's history is to us too solemn, the wrongs for which humanity and freedom arraign him, are too flagrant, to allow us to play the part of sentimentalists around his grave at St. Helena. We leave this to the more refined age in which we live; and we do so in the hope that an age is coming of less tender mould, but of loftier, sterner feeling, and of deeper sympathy with the whole human race. Should our humble page then live, we trust with an undoubting faith, that the uncompromising indignation with which we plead the cause of our oppressed and insulted nature, will not be set down to the account of our vindictiveness and hardness of heart.

We observed that the moral indignation of many towards Bonaparte had been impaired or turned away, not only by his supposed wrongs but by the unworthy use which his conquerors made of their triumph. We are told, that bad as was his despotism, the Holy Alliance is a worse one; and that Napoleon was less a scourge, than the present coalition of the continental monarchs, framed for the systematic suppression of freedom. By such reasoning his crimes are cloaked, and his fall made the theme of lamentation. It is not one of the smallest errors and sins of the Allied Sovereigns, that they have contrived, by their base policy, to turn the resentments and moral displeasure of men from the usurper upon themselves. For these sovereigns we have no defence to offer. We yield to none in de-

festation of the Holy Alliance, profanely so called. To us its doctrines are as false and pestilent, as any broached by Jacobinism. The Allied Monarchs are adding to the other wrongs of despots, that of flagrant ingratitude; of ingratitude to the generous and brave nations, to whom they owe their thrones, whose spirit of independence and patriotism, and whose hatred of the oppressor, contributed more than standing armies to raise up the fallen, and to strengthen the falling monarchies of Europe. Be it never forgotten in the records of despotism, let history record it on her most durable tablet, that the first use made by the principal continental sovereigns of their regained or confirmed power, was, to conspire against the hopes and rights of the nations by whom they had been saved; and to combine the military power of Europe against free institutions, against the press, against the spirit of liberty and patriotism which had sprung up in the glorious struggle with Napoleon, against the right of the people to exert an influence on the governments by which their dearest interests were to be controlled. Never be it forgotten, that such was the honour of sovereigns, such their requital for the blood which had been shed freely in their defence. Freedom and humanity send up a solemn and prevailing cry against them to that tribunal, where kings and subjects are soon to stand as equals.

But still we should be strangely blind, if we were not to feel that the fall of Napoleon was a blessing to

the world. Who can look, for example, at France, and not see there a degree of freedom which could never have grown up under the terrible frown of the usurper? True, Bonaparte's life, though seemed a charmed one, must at length have ended; and we are told that then his empire would have been broken, and that the general crash, by some inexplicable process, would have given birth to a more extensive and durable liberty than can now be hoped. But such anticipations seem to us to be built on a strange inattention to the nature and inevitable consequences of Napoleon's power. It was wholly a military power. He was literally turning Europe into a camp, and drawing its best talent into one occupation—war. Thus Europe was retracing its steps to those ages of calamity and darkness, when the only law was the sword. The progress of centuries, which had consisted chiefly in the substitution of intelligence, public opinion, and other mild and rational influences, for brutal force, was to be reversed. At Bonaparte's death, his empire must, indeed, have been dissolved; but military chiefs, like Alexander's lieutenants, would have divided it. The sword alone would have shaped its future communities; and after years of desolation and bloodshed, Europe would have found, not repose, but a respite, an armed truce, under warriors, whose only title to empire would have been their own good blades, and the weight of whose thrones would have been upheld by military force alone. Amidst such convulsions, during which

the press would have been every where fettered, and the military spirit would have triumphed over and swallowed up the spirit and glory of letters and liberal a[illegible] greatly fear that the human intellect would have lost its present impulse, its thirst for progress, and would have fallen back towards barbarism. Let not the friends of freedom bring dishonour on themselves or desert their cause, by instituting comparisons between Napoleon and legitimate sovereigns, which may be construed into eulogies on the former. For ourselves, we have no sympathy with tyranny, whether it bear the name of usurpation or legitimacy. We are not pleading the cause of the Allied Sovereigns. In our judgement, they have contracted the very guilt against which they have pretended to combine. In our apprehension, a conspiracy against the rights of the human race, is as foul a crime as rebellion against the rights of sovereigns; nor is there less of treason in warring against public freedom, than in assailing royal power. Still we are bound in truth to confess, that the Allied Sovereigns are not to be ranked with Bonaparte, whose design against the independence of nations and the liberties of the world, in this age of civilization, liberal thinking, and Christian knowledge, is in our estimation the most nefarious enterprise recorded in history.

The series of events, which it has been our province to review, offers subjects of profound thought

and solemn instruction to the moralist and politician. We have retraced it with many painful feelings. It shows us a great people, who had caught some indistinct glimpses of freedom, and of a nobler and a happier political constitution, betrayed by their leaders, and brought back, by a military despot, to heavier chains than those they had broken. We see with indignation one man, a man like ourselves, subjecting whole nations to his absolute rule. It is this wrong and insult to our race which has chiefly moved us. Had a storm of God's ordination passed over Europe, prostrating its capitals, sweeping off its villages, burying millions in ruins, we should have wept, we should have trembled. But in this there would have been only wretchedness. Now we also see debasement. To us there is something radically, and increasingly shocking, in the thought of one man's will becoming a law to his race; in the thought of multitudes, of vast communities, surrendering conscience, intellect, their affections, their rights, their interests, to the stern mandate of a fellow-creature. When we see one word of a frail man on the throne of France, tearing a hundred thousand sons from their homes, breaking asunder the sacred ties of domestic life, sentencing myriads of the young to make murder their calling, and rapacity their means of support, and extorting from nations their treasures to extend this ruinous sway, we are ready to ask our-

selves, Is not this a dream? And when the sad reality comes home to us, we blush for a race which can stoop to such an abject lot. At length, indeed, we see the tyrant humbled, stripped of power; but stripped by those who, with one exception, are not unwilling to play the despot on a narrower scale, and to break down the spirit of nations under the same iron sway.

How is it, that tyranny has thus triumphed? that the hopes with which we greeted the French revolution have been crushed? that an usurper plucked up the last roots of the tree of liberty, and planted despotism in its place? The chief cause is not far to seek, nor can it be too often urged on the friends of freedom. France failed through the want of that moral preparation for liberty, without which the blessing cannot be secured. She was not ripe for the good she sought. She was too corrupt for freedom. France had indeed to contend with great political ignorance; but had not ignorance been reinforced by deep moral defect, she might have won her way to free institutions. Her character forbade her to be free; and it now seems strange that we could ever have expected her to secure this boon. How could we believe, that a liberty of which that heartless scoffer, Voltaire, was a chief apostle, could have triumphed? Most of the preachers of French liberty had thrown off all the convictions which ennoble the mind. Man's connection with God they —

broke, for they declared that there was no God, in whom to trust in the great struggle for liberty. Human immortality, that truth which is the seed of all greatness, they derided. To their philosophy, man was a creature of chance, a compound of matter, an ephemeron, a worm, who was soon to rot and perish for ever. What insanity was it to expect that such men were to work out the emancipation of their race! that in such hands the hopes and dearest rights of humanity were secure! Liberty was tainted by their touch, polluted by their breath, and yet we trusted that it was to rise in health and glory from their embrace. We looked to men who openly founded morality on private interest, for the sacrifices, the devotion, the heroic virtue, which freedom always demands from her assertors.

The great cause of the discomfiture of the late European struggle for liberty is easily understood by an American, who recurs to the history of his own revolution. This issued prosperously, because it was begun and was conducted under the auspices of private and public virtue. Our liberty did not come to us by accident, nor was it the gift of a few leaders; but its seeds were sown plentifully in the minds of the whole people. It was rooted in the conscience and reason of the nation. It was the growth of deliberate convictions and generous principles liberally diffused. We had no Paris, no me-

tropolis, which a few leaders swayed, and which sent forth its influences, like 'a mighty heart,' through dependent and subservient provinces. The country was all heart. The living principle pervaded the community, and every village added strength to the solemn purpose of being free. We have here an explanation of a striking fact in the history of our revolution; we mean the want or absence of that description of great men, whom we meet in other countries; men, who, by their distinct and single agency, and by their splendid deeds, determine a nation's fate. There was too much greatness in the American people, to admit this overshadowing greatness of leaders. Accordingly the United States had no liberator, no political saviour. Washington indeed conferred on us great blessings. But Washington was not a hero in the common sense of that word. We never spoke of him as the French did of Bonaparte, never talked of his eagle-eyed irresistible genius, as if this were to work out our safety. We never lost our self-respect. We felt that, under God, we were to be free through our own courage, energy, and wisdom, under the animating and guiding influences of this great and good mind. Washington served us chiefly by his sublime moral qualities, and not by transcendent talent, which, we apprehend, he did not possess. To him belonged the proud distinction of being the leader in a revolution, without awakening one

doubt or solicitude as to the spotless purity of his purpose. His was the glory of being the brightest manifestation of the spirit which reigned in his country; and in this way he became a source of energy, a bond of union, the centre of an enlightened people's confidence. In such a revolution as that of France, Washington would have been nothing; for that sympathy which subsisted between him and his fellow-citizens, and which was the secret of his power, would have been wanting. By an instinct, which is unerring, we call Washington, with grateful reverence, the Father of his Country, but not its Saviour. A people which wants a saviour, which does not possess an earnest and pledge of freedom in its own heart, is not yet ready to be free.

A great question here offers itself, at which we can only glance. If a moral preparation is required for freedom, how, it is asked, can Europe ever be free? How, under despotisms which now crush the continent, can nations grow ripe for liberty? Is it to be hoped that men will learn, in the school of slavery, the spirit and virtues which we are told can alone work out their deliverance? In the absolute governments of Europe, the very instruments of forming an enlightened and generous love of freedom are bent into the service of tyranny. The press is an echo of the servile doctrines of the court. The schools and seminaries of education are employed to taint the young mind with the maxims

of despotism. Even Christianity is turned into a preacher of legitimacy, and its temples are desecrated by the abject teaching of unconditional submission. How then is the spirit of a wise and moral freedom to be generated and diffused? We have stated the difficulty in its full force; for nothing is gained by winking out of sight the tremendous obstacles with which liberal principles and institutions must contend. We have not time at present to answer the great question now proposed. We will only say, that we do not despair; and we will briefly suggest what seems to us the chief expedient, by which the cause of freedom, obstructed as it is, must now be advanced. In despotic countries, those men, whom God hath inspired with lofty sentiments and a thirst for freedom (and such are spread through all Europe), must, in their individual capacity, communicate themselves to individual minds. The cause of liberty on the continent cannot now be forwarded by the action of men in masses. But in every country there are those who feel their degradation and their wrongs, who abhor tyranny as the chief obstruction of the progress of nations, and who are willing and prepared to suffer for liberty. Let such men spread around them their own spirit by every channel which a jealous despotism has not closed. Let them give utterance to sentiments of magnanimity in private conference, and still more by the press; for there are modes of clothing and express-

ing kindling truths, which, it is presumed, no censorship would dare to proscribe. Let them especially teach that great truth, which is the seminal principle of a virtuous freedom, and the very foundation of morals and religion; we mean the doctrine, that conscience, the voice of God in every heart, is to be listened to above all other guides and lords; that there is a sovereign within us clothed with more awful powers and rights than any outward king; and that he alone is worthy the name of a man, who gives himself up solemnly, deliberately, to obey this internal guide through peril and in death. This is the spirit of freedom; for no man is wholly and immutably free, but he who has broken every outward yoke, that he may obey his own deliberate conscience. This is the lesson to be taught, alike in republics and despotisms. As yet it has but dawned on the world. Its full application remains to be developed. They who have been baptized, by a true experience into this vital and all-comprehending truth, must every where be its propagators; and he who makes one convert to it near a despot's throne, has broken one link of that despot's chain. It is chiefly in the diffusion of this loftiness of moral sentiment, that we place our hope of freedom; and we have a hope, because we know that there are those who have drunk into this truth, and are ready, when God calls, to be its martyrs. We do not despair, for there is a contagion we

would rather say, a divine power in sublime moral principle. This is our chief trust. We have less and less hope from force and bloodshed, as the instruments of working out man's redemption from slavery. History shows us not a few princes, who have gained or strengthened thrones by assassination or war. But freedom, which is another name for justice, honour, and benevolence, scorns to use the private dagger, and wields with trembling the public sword. The true conspiracy, before which tyranny is to fall, is that of virtuous elevated minds, which shall consecrate themselves to the work of awakening in men a consciousness of the rights, powers, purposes, and greatness of human nature; which shall oppose to force the heroism of intellect and conscience, and the spirit of self-sacrifice. We believe that, at this moment, there are virtue and wisdom enough to shake despotic thrones, were they as confiding as they should be in God and their own might, and were they to pour themselves through every channel into the public mind.

We close our present labours with commending to the protection of Almighty God the cause of human freedom and improvement. We adore the wisdom and goodness of his providence, which has ordained that liberty shall be wrought out by the magnanimity, courage, and sacrifices of men. We bless him for the glorious efforts which this cause

has already called forth; for the intrepid defenders who have gathered round it, and whose fame is a most precious legacy of past ages; for the toils and sufferings by which it has been upheld; for the awakening and thrilling voice which comes to us from the dungeon and scaffold, where the martyrs of liberty have pined or bled. We bless him that even tyranny has been overruled for good by exciting a resistance, which has revealed to us the strength of virtuous principle in the human soul. We beseech this great and good Parent, from whom all pure influences proceed, to enkindle, by his quickening breath, an unquenchable love of virtue and freedom in those favoured men, whom he hath enriched and signalized by eminent gifts and powers, that they may fulfil the high function of inspiring their fellow-beings with a consciousness of the birthright and destination of human nature. Wearied with violence and blood, we beseech him to subvert oppressive governments by the gentle yet awful power of truth and virtue; by the teachings of uncorrupted Christianity; by the sovereignty of enlightened opinion; by the triumph of sentiments of magnanimity; by mild, rational, and purifying influences, which will raise the spirit of the enslaved, and which sovereigns will be unable to withstand. For this peaceful revolution we earnestly pray. If, however, after long forbearing, and unavailing applications to justice and humanity, the friends of

freedom should be summoned by the voice of God within, and by his providence abroad, to vindicate their rights with other arms, to do a sterner work, to repel despotic force by force, may they not forget, even in this hour of provocation, the spirit which their high calling demands. Let them take the sword with awe, as those on whom a holy function is devolved. Let them regard themselves as ministers and delegates of Him, whose dearest attribute is mercy. Let them not stain their sacred cause by one cruel deed, by the infliction of one needless pang, by shedding without cause one drop of human blood.

THOUGHTS

ON

POWER AND GREATNESS,

POLITICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND MORAL;

IN CONTINUATION OF AN

ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTER

OF

NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

In a former number of our work*, we reviewed the life and character of Napoleon Bonaparte. We resume the subject, not for the purpose of speaking more largely of the individual, but that we may consider more distinctly the *principle of action* which governed him, and of which he was a remarkable manifestation.

The passion for power was Bonaparte's ruling principle. Power was his idol. He worshipped no other. To gain supremacy and unlimited sway, to subject men to his will, was his chief, settled, unrelenting purpose. This passion drew and converted into itself the whole energy of his nature. The love

* Vol. iv. No. v. of the Christian Examiner, published at Boston, in the United States.—The following 'Thoughts' appear in Vol. v. No. ii. of the same work.

of power, that common principle, explains, in a great degree, his character and life. His crimes did not spring from any passion or impulse peculiar to himself. With all his contempt of the human race, he still belonged to it. It is true both of the brightest virtues and the blackest vices, though they seem to set apart their possessors from the rest of mankind, that the seeds of them are sown in every human breast. The man, who attracts and awes us by his intellectual and moral grandeur, is only an example and anticipation of the improvements, for which every mind was endowed with reason and conscience; and the worst man has become such by the perversion and excess of desires and appetites which he shares with his whole race. Napoleon had no element of character which others do not possess. It was his misery and guilt that he was usurped and absorbed by one passion; that his whole mind shot up into one growth; that his singular strength of thought and will, which, if consecrated to virtue, would have enrolled him among the benefactors of mankind, was enslaved by one lust. He is not to be gazed on as a prodigy. He was a manifestation of our own nature. He teaches on a large scale what thousands teach on a narrow one. He shows us the greatness of the ruin which is wrought when the order of the mind is subverted, conscience dethroned, and a strong passion left without restraint to turn every inward and outward resource to the accomplishment of a selfish purpose.

The influence of the *love of power* on human affairs is so constant, unbounded, and tremendous, that we think this principle of our nature worthy of distinct consideration, and shall devote to it a few pages as a fit sequel to our notice of Bonaparte.

The passion for power is one of the most universal, nor is it to be regarded as a crime in all its forms. Sweeping censures on a natural sentiment cast blame on the Creator. This principle shows itself in the very dawn of our existence. The child never exults and rejoices more, than when it becomes conscious of power by overcoming difficulties, or compassing new ends. All our desires and appetites lend aid and energy to this passion; for all find increase of gratification, in proportion to our increase of power. We ought to add, that this principle is fed from nobler sources. Power is a chief element of all the commanding qualities of our nature. It enters into all the higher virtues; such as magnanimity, fortitude, constancy. It enters into intellectual eminence. It is power of thought and utterance which immortalizes the products of genius. Is it strange that an attribute, through which all our passions reach their objects, and which characterizes whatever is great or admirable in man, should awaken intense desire, and be sought as one of the chief goods of life?

The love of power, we have said, is not in all its forms a crime. There are indeed various kinds of

power, which it is our duty to covet, accumulate, and hold fast. First, there is *inward* power, the most precious of all possessions; power over ourselves; power to withstand trial, to bear suffering, to front danger; power over pleasure and pain; power to follow our convictions, however resisted by menace or scorn; the power of calm reliance in seasons of darkness and storms. Again, there is a power over *outward* things; the power by which the mind triumphs over matter, presses into its service the subtlest and strongest elements, makes the winds, fire, and steam its ministers, rears the city, opens a path through the ocean, and makes the wilderness blossom as the rose. These forms of power, especially the first, are glorious distinctions of our race, nor can we prize them too highly.

There is another power, which is our principal concern in the present discussion. We mean power over our fellow creatures. It is this which ambition chiefly covets, and which has instigated to more crime, and spread more misery, than any other cause. We are not however to condemn even this universally. There is a truly noble sway of man over man; one which it is our honour to seek and exert; which is earned by well doing; which is a chief recompense of virtue. We refer to the quickening influence of a good and great mind over other minds, by which it brings them into sympathy with itself. Far from condemning this, we are anxious to hold it forth as the purest glory which virtuous ambition

can propose. The power of awakening, enlightening, elevating our fellow-creatures, may, with peculiar fitness, be called divine; for there is no agency of God so beneficent and sublime as that which he exerts on rational natures, and by which he assimilates them to himself. This quickening power over other minds is the surest test of greatness. We admire indeed the energy which subdues the material creation, or developes the physical resources of a state. But it is a nobler might which calls forth the intellectual and moral resources of a people, which communicates new impulses to society, throws into circulation new and stirring thoughts, gives the mind a new consciousness of its faculties, and rouses and fortifies the will to an unconquerable purpose of well doing. This spiritual power is worth all other. To improve man's outward condition is a secondary agency, and is chiefly important as it gives the means of inward growth. The most glorious minister of God on earth, is he who speaks with a life-giving energy to other minds, breathing into them the love of truth and virtue, strengthening them to suffer in a good cause, and lifting them up above the senses and the world.

We know not a more exhilarating thought, than that this power is given to men; that we can not only change the face of the outward world, and by virtuous discipline improve ourselves, but that we may become springs of life and light to our fellow beings. We are thus admitted to a fellowship with

Jesus Christ, whose highest end was, that he might act with a new and celestial energy on the human mind. We rejoice to think, that he did not come to monopolize this divine sway, to enjoy a solitary grandeur, but to receive others, even all who should obey his religion, into the partnership of this honour and happiness. Every Christian, in proportion to his progress, acquires a measure of this divine agency. In the humblest conditions, a power goes forth from a devout and disinterested spirit, calling forth silently moral and religious sentiment, perhaps in a child or some other friend, and teaching, without the aid of words, the loveliness and peace of sincere and single-hearted virtue. In the more enlightened classes, individuals now and then rise up, who, through a singular force and elevation of soul, obtain a sway over men's minds to which no limit can be prescribed. They speak with a voice which is heard by distant nations, and which goes down to future ages. Their names are repeated with veneration by millions, and millions read in their lives and writings a quickening testimony to the greatness of the mind, to its moral strength, to the reality of disinterested virtue. These are the true sovereigns of the earth. They share in the royalty of Jesus Christ. They have a greatness, which will be more and more felt. The time is coming, its signs are visible, when this long mistaken attribute of greatness will be seen to belong eminently, if not exclusively, to those, who, by their characters, deeds,

sufferings, writings, leave imperishable and ennobling traces of themselves on the human mind. Among these legitimate sovereigns of the world, will be ranked the philosopher, who penetrates the secrets of the universe, and opens new fields to the intellect; who spreads enlarged and liberal habits of thought, and who helps men to understand, that an ever-growing knowledge is the patrimony destined for them by the 'Father of their spirits.' Among them will be ranked the statesman, who, escaping a vulgar policy, rises to the discovery of the true interest of a state; who understands that a nation's mind is more valuable than its soil; who inspirits a people's enterprise, without making them the slaves of wealth; who looks for his glory to posterity, and is mainly anxious to originate or give stability to institutions by which society may be carried forward. Among these will be ranked, perhaps on the highest throne, the moral and religious Reformer, who truly merits that name; who rises above the spirit of his times; who is moved by a holy impulse to assail vicious establishments, sustained by fierce passions and inveterate prejudices; who rescues great truths from the corruptions of ages; who, joining calm and deep thought to profound feeling, secures to religion at once enlightened and earnest conviction; who unfolds to men higher forms of virtue than they have yet attained or conceived; who gives brighter and more thrilling views of the perfection for which they were framed, and in-

spires a victorious faith in the perpetual progress of our nature.

There is one characteristic of this power which belongs to truly great minds, particularly deserving notice. Far from enslaving, it makes more and more free, those on whom it is exercised; and in this respect it differs wholly from the vulgar sway which ambition thirsts for. It awakens a kindred power in others, calls their faculties into new life, and particularly strengthens them to follow their own deliberate convictions of truth and duty. It breathes conscious energy, self-respect, moral independence, and a scorn of every foreign yoke.

There is another power over men, very different from this; a power, not to quicken and elevate, but to crush and subdue; a power which robs men of the free use of their nature, takes them out of their own hands, and compels them to bend to another's will. This is the sway which men grasp at most eagerly, and which it is our great purpose to expose. To reign, to give laws, to clothe their own wills with omnipotence, to annihilate all other wills, to spoil the individual of that self-direction which is his most precious right; this has ever been deemed by multitudes the highest prize for competition and conflict. The most envied men are those who have succeeded in prostrating multitudes, in subjecting whole communities to their single will. It is the love of this power, in all its forms, which we are anxious to hold up to reprobation. If any

crime should be placed by society beyond pardon, it is this.

This power has been exerted most conspicuously and perniciously by two classes of men; the priest or minister of religion, and the civil ruler. Both rely on the same instruments; that is, pain or terror: the first calling to his aid the fires and torments of the future world, and practising on the natural dread of invisible powers; and the latter availing himself of chains, dungeons, and gibbets in the present life. Through these terrible applications, man has in all ages and in almost every country been made, in a greater or less degree, a slave and machine; been shackled in all his faculties, and degraded into a tool of others' wills and passions. The influence of almost every political and religious institution has been to make man abject in mind, fearful, servile, a mechanical repeater of opinions which he dares not try, and a contributor of [illegible] wealth, and blood to governments which never dreamed of the general weal as their only legitimate end. On the immense majority of men, thus wronged and enslaved, the consciousness of their own nature has not yet dawned; and the doctrine, that each has a mind worth more than the material world, and framed to grow forever by a self-forming, self-directing energy, is still a secret, a mystery, notwithstanding the clear annunciation of it, ages ago, by Jesus Christ. We know not a stronger proof of the intenseness and nefariousness of the love of

power, than the fact of its having virtually abrogated Christianity, and even turned into an engine of dominion, a revelation which breathes throughout the spirit of freedom, proclaims the essential equality of the human race, and directs its most solemn denunciations against the passion for rule and empire.

That this power, which consists in force and compulsion, in the imposition on the many of the will and judgement of one or a few, is of a low order when compared with the quickening influence over others, of which we have before spoken, we need not stop to prove. But the remark is less obvious, though not less true, that it is not only inferior in kind, but in amount or degree. This may not be so easily acknowledged. He, whose will is passively obeyed by a nation, or whose creed is implicitly adopted by a spreading sect, may not easily believe that his power is exceeded, not only in kind or quality, but in extent, by him who wields only the silent, spiritual influence of moral and intellectual gifts. But the superiority of moral to arbitrary sway in this particular, is proved by its effects. Moral power is creative; arbitrary power wastes away the spirit and force of those on whom it is exerted. And is it not a mightier work to create than to destroy? A higher energy is required to quicken than to crush; to elevate than to depress; to warm and expand than to chill and contract. Any hand, even the weakest, may take away life. Another agency is required to kindle or restore it. A vulgar

incendiary may destroy in an hour a magnificent structure, the labour of ages. Has he energy to be compared with the creative intellect in which this work had its origin? A fanatic of ordinary talent may send terror through a crowd; and by the craft, which is so often joined with fanaticism, may fasten on multitudes a debasing creed. Has he power to be compared with him, who rescues from darkness one only of these enslaved minds, and quickens it to think justly and nobly in relation to God, duty, and immortality? The energies of a single soul awakened, by such an influence, to the free and full use of its powers, may surpass in their progress, the intellectual activity of a whole community, enchained and debased by fanaticism or outward force. Arbitrary power, whether civil or religious, if tried by the only fair test, that is, by its effects, seems to have more affinity with weakness than strength. It enfeebles and narrows what it acts upon. Its efficiency resembles that of darkness and cold in the natural world. True power is vivifying, productive, builds up, and gives strength. We have a noble type and manifestation of it in the sun, which calls forth and diffuses motion, life, energy, and beauty. He who succeeds in chaining men's understandings and breaking their wills, may indeed number millions as his subjects. But a weak puny race are the products of his sway, and they can only reach the stature and force of men by throwing off his yoke. He who, by an intellectual and moral

energy, awakens kindred energy in others, touches springs of infinite might, gives impulse to faculties to which no bounds can be prescribed, begins an action which will never end. One great and kindling thought from a retired and obscure man, may live when thrones are fallen, and the memory of those who filled them obliterated, and like an undying fire, may illuminate and quicken all future generations.

We have spoken of the inferiority and worthlessness of that dominion over others, which has been coveted so greedily in all ages. We should rejoice could we convey some just idea of its moral turpitude. Of all injuries and crimes, the most flagrant is chargeable on him who aims to establish dominion over his brethren. He wars with what is more precious than life. He would rob men of their chief prerogative and glory; we mean of self-dominion, of that empire which is given to a rational and moral being over his own soul and his own life. Such a being is framed to find honour and happiness in forming and swaying himself, in adopting as his supreme standard his convictions of truth and duty, in unfolding his powers by free exertion, in acting from a principle within, from his growing conscience. His proper and noblest attributes are self-government, self-reverence, energy of thought, energy in choosing the right and the good, energy in casting off all other dominion. He was created for empire in his own breast, and woe

woe to them who would pluck from him this sceptre. A mind, inspired by God with reason and conscience, and capable, through these endowments, of progress in truth and duty, is a sacred thing; more sacred than temples made with hands, or even than this outward universe. It is of nobler lineage than that of which human aristocracy makes its boast. It bears the lineaments of a Divine Parent. It has not only a physical, but moral connection with the Supreme Being. Through its self-determining power, it is accountable for its deeds, and for whatever it becomes. Responsibility, that which above all things makes existence solemn, is laid upon it. Its great end is to conform itself, by its own energy, and by spiritual succours which its own prayers and faithfulness secure, to that perfection of wisdom and goodness, of which God is the original and source, which shines upon us from the whole outward world, but of which the intelligent soul is a truer recipient and a brighter image, even than the sun with all his splendours. From these views we learn, that no outrage, no injury, can equal that which is perpetrated by him, who would break down and subjugate the human mind; who would rob men of self-reverence; who would bring them to stand more in awe of outward authority, than of reason and conscience in their own souls; who would make himself a standard and law for his race, and shape, by force or terror, the free spirits of others after his own judgement and will.

All excellence, whether intellectual or moral, involves, as its essential elements, freedom, energy, and moral independence; so that the invader of these, whether from the throne or the pulpit, invades the most sacred interest of the human race. Intellectual excellence implies and requires these. This does not consist in passive assent even to the highest truths; or in the most extensive stores of knowledge acquired by an implicit faith, and lodged in the inert memory. It lies in force, freshness, and independence of thought; and is most conspicuously manifested by him, who, loving truth supremely, seeks it resolutely, follows the light without fear, and modifies the views of others by the patient, strenuous exercise of his own faculties. To a man thus intellectually free, truth is not, what it is to passive multitudes, a foreign substance, dormant, lifeless, fruitless,—but penetrating, prolific, full of vitality, and ministering to the health and expansion of the soul. And what we have said of intellectual excellence is still more true of moral. This has its foundation and root in freedom, and cannot exist a moment without it. The very idea of virtue is, that it is a free act, the product or result of the mind's self-determining power. It is not good feeling, infused by nature or caught by sympathy; nor is it good conduct into which we have slidden through imitation, or which has been forced upon us by another's will. We ourselves are its authors in a high and peculiar sense. We

indeed depend on God for virtue. Our capacity for it is wholly his gift and inspiration, and without his perpetual aid this capacity would avail nothing. But his aid is not compulsion. He respects, he cannot violate, that moral freedom which is his richest gift. To the individual, the decision of his own character is left. He has more than kingly power in his own soul. Let him never, never resign it. Let none dare to interfere with it. Virtue is self-dominion, or what is the same thing, it is self-subjection to the principle of duty, that highest law in the soul. If these views of intellectual and moral excellence be just, then to invade men's freedom is to aim the deadliest blow at their honour and happiness; and their worst foe is he who fetters their reason, who makes his will their law, who makes them tools, echoes, copies of himself.

Perhaps it may be objected to the representation of virtue as consisting in self-dominion, that the Scriptures speak of it as consisting in obedience to God. But these are perfectly compatible and harmonious views; for genuine obedience to God is the free choice and adoption of a law, the great principles of which our own minds approve, and our own consciences bind on us; which is not an arbitrary injunction, but an emanation and expression of the Divine mind; and which is intended throughout to give energy, dignity, and enlargement to our best powers. He, and he only, obeys God virtuously and acceptably, who reverences

right, not power; who has chosen rectitude as his supreme rule; who sees and reveres in God the fulness and brightness of moral excellence, and who sees in obedience the progress and perfection of his own nature. That subjection to the Deity, which, we fear, is too common, in which the mind surrenders itself to mere power and will, is any thing but virtue. We fear that it is disloyalty to that moral principle, which is ever to be reverenced as God's vicegerent in the rational soul.

Perhaps some may fear that, in our zeal for the freedom and independence of the individual mind, we unsettle government, and almost imply that it is a wrong. Far from it. We hold government to be an essential means of our intellectual and moral education, and would strengthen it by pointing out its legitimate functions. Government, as far as it is rightful, is the guardian and friend of freedom; so that in exalting the one we enforce the other. The highest aim of all authority is to confer liberty. This is true of domestic rule. The great, we may say the single, object of parental government, of a wise and virtuous education, is to give the child the fullest use of his own powers; to give him inward force; to train him up to govern himself. The same is true of the authority of Jesus Christ. He came indeed to rule mankind; but to rule them, not by arbitrary statutes, not by force and menace, not by mere will, but by setting before them, in precept and life, those everlasting rules of rectitude

which Heaven obeys, and of which every soul contains the living germs. He came to exert a moral power; to reign by the manifestation of celestial virtues; to awaken the energy of holy purpose in the free mind. He came to publish liberty to the captives; to open the prison-door; to break the power of the passions; to break the yoke of a ceremonial religion, which had been imposed in the childhood of the race; to exalt us to a manly homage and obedience to our Creator. Of civil government, too, the great end is to secure freedom. Its proper and highest function is, to watch over the liberties of each and all, and to open to a community the widest field for all its powers. Its very chains and prisons have the general freedom for their aim. They are just, only when used to curb oppression and wrong; to disarm him who has a tyrant's heart, if not a tyrant's power; who wars against others' rights, who, by invading property or life, would substitute force for the reign of equal laws. Freedom, we repeat it, is the end of government. To exalt men to self-rule is the end of all other rule, and he who would fasten on them his arbitrary will is their worst foe.

We have aimed to show the guilt of the love of power and dominion, by showing the ruin which it brings on the mind, by enlarging on the preciousness of that inward freedom which it invades and destroys. To us, this view is the most impressive; but the guilt of this passion may also be discerned,

and by some more clearly, in its outward influences; in the desolation, bloodshed, and woe, of which it is the perpetual cause. We owe to it almost all the miseries of war. To spread the sway of one or a few, thousands and millions have been turned into machines under the name of soldiers, armed with instruments of destruction, and then sent to reduce others to their own lot by fear and pain, by fire and sword, by butchery and pillage. And is it light guilt, to array man against his brother; to make murder the trade of thousands; to drench the earth with human blood; to turn it into a desert; to scatter families like chaff; to make mothers widows, and children orphans;—and to do all this for the purpose of spreading a still gloomier desolation, for the purpose of subjugating men's souls, turning them into base parasites, extorting from them a degrading homage, humbling them in their own eyes, and breaking them to servility as the chief duty of life? When the passion for power succeeds, as it generally has done, in establishing despotism, it seems to make even civilization a doubtful good. Whilst the monarch and his court are abandoned to a wasteful luxury, the peasantry, rooted to the soil, and doomed to a perpetual round of labours, are raised but little above the brute. There are parts of Europe, Christian Europe, in which the peasant, through whose sweat kings and nobles riot in plenty, seems to enjoy less, on the whole, than the untamed Indian of our forests. Chained to one spot,

living on the cheapest vegetables, sometimes unable to buy salt to season his coarse fare, seldom or never tasting animal food, having for his shelter a mud-walled hut, floored with earth or stone, and subjected equally with the brute to the rule of a superior, he seems to us to partake less of animal, intellectual, and moral pleasures, than the free wanderer of the woods, whose steps no man fetters; whose wigwam no tyrant violates; whose chief toil is hunting,—that noblest of sports; who feasts on the deer,—that most luxurious of viands; to whom streams, as well as woods, pay tribute; whose adventurous life gives sagacity; and in whom peril nourishes courage and self-command. We are no advocates for savage life. We know that its boasted freedom is a delusion. The single fact that human nature in this wild state makes no progress, is proof enough that it wants true liberty. We mean only to say that man in the hands of despotism is sometimes degraded below the savage; that it were better for him to be lawless, than to live under lawless sway.

It is the part of Christians to look on the passion for power and dominion with strong abhorrence; for it is singularly hostile to the genius of their religion. Jesus Christ always condemned it. One of the striking marks of his moral greatness, and of the originality of his character, was, that he held no fellowship and made no compromise with this universal spirit of his age, but withstood it in every form. He found the Jews intoxicating themselves

with dreams of empire. Of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, the most familiar and dear to them, were those which announced him as a conqueror, and which were construed by their worldliness into a promise of triumphs to the people, from whom he was to spring. Even the chosen disciples of Jesus looked to him for this good. To sit on his right hand and on his left, or in other words, to hold the most commanding stations in his kingdom, was not only their lurking wish, but their open and importunate request. But there was no passion on which Jesus frowned more severely than on this. He taught, that to be great in his kingdom, men must serve, instead of ruling, their brethren. He placed among them a child as an emblem of the humility of his religion. His most terrible rebukes fell on the lordly aspiring Pharisee. In his own person, he was mild and condescending, exacting no personal service, living with his disciples as a friend, sharing their wants, sleeping in their fishing-boat, and even washing their feet; and in all this, he expressly proposed himself to them as a pattern, knowing well that the last triumph of disinterestedness is to forget our own superiority, in our sympathy, solicitude, tenderness, respect, and self-denying zeal for those who are below us. We cannot indeed wonder that the lust of power should be encountered by the sternest rebukes and menace of Christianity, because it wages open war with the great end of this religion, which is the elevation of the

human mind. No corruption of this religion is more palpable and more enormous, than that which turns it into an instrument of dominion, and which makes it teach that man's primary duty is to give himself a passive material into the hands of his minister, priest, or king.

The subject which we now discuss is one in which all nations have an interest, and especially our own; and we should fail of our main purpose, were we not to lead our readers to apply it to ourselves. The passion for ruling, though most completely developed in despotisms, is confined to no forms of government. It is the chief peril of free states, the natural enemy of free institutions. It agitates our own country, and still throws an uncertainty over the great experiment we are making here in behalf of liberty. We will try then, in a few words, to expose its influences and dangers, and to abate that zeal with which a participation in office and power is sought among ourselves.

It is the distinction of republican institutions, that whilst they compel the passion for power to moderate its pretensions, and to satisfy itself with more limited gratifications, they tend to spread it more widely through the community, and to make it a universal principle. The doors of office being opened to all, crowds burn to rush in. A thousand hands are stretched out to grasp the reins which are denied to none. Perhaps in this boasted and boasting land

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of liberty, not a few, if called to state the chief good of a republic, would place it in this; that every man is eligible to every office, and that the highest places of power and trust are prizes for universal competition. The superiority attributed by many to our institutions, is, not that they secure the greatest freedom, but give every man a chance of ruling; not that they reduce the power of government within the narrowest limits which the safety of the state admits, but throw it into as many hands as possible. The despot's great crime is thought to be, that he keeps the delight of dominion to himself, that he makes a monopoly of it, whilst our more generous institutions, by breaking it into parcels, and inviting the multitude to scramble for it, spread this joy more widely. The result is, that political ambition infects our country, and generates a feverish restlessness and discontent, which, to the monarchist, may seem more than a balance for our forms of liberty. The spirit of intrigue, which in absolute governments is confined to courts, walks abroad through the land; and as individuals can accomplish no political purposes single-handed, they band themselves into parties, ostensibly framed for public ends, but aiming only at the acquisition of power. The nominal sovereign, that is, the people, like all other sovereigns, is courted and flattered, and told that it can do no wrong. Its pride is pampered, its passions inflamed, its prejudices made inveterate. Such are the processes by which other

republics have been subverted, and he must be blind who cannot trace them among ourselves. We mean not to exaggerate our dangers. We rejoice to know, that the improvements of society oppose many checks to the love of power. But every wise man who sees its workings, must dread it as our chief foe.

This passion derives strength and vehemence in our country from the common idea, that political power is the highest prize which society has to offer. We know not a more general delusion, nor is it the least dangerous. Instilled as it is in our youth, it gives infinite excitement to political ambition. It turns the active talent of the country to public station as the supreme good, and makes it restless, intriguing, and unprincipled. It calls out hosts of selfish competitors for the comparatively few places, and encourages a bold, unblushing pursuit of personal elevation, which a just moral sense and self-respect in the community would frown upon and cover with shame. This prejudice has come down from past ages, and is one of their worst bequests. To govern others has always been thought the highest function on earth. We have a remarkable proof of the strength and pernicious influence of this persuasion, in the manner in which history has been written. Who fill the page of history? Political and military leaders, who have lived for one end, to subdue and govern their fellow beings. These occupy the foreground; and the people, the

human race, dwindle into insignificance, and are almost lost behind their masters. The proper and noblest object of history is to record the vicissitudes of society, its spirit in different ages, the causes which have determined its progress and decline; and especially the manifestation and growth of its highest attributes and interests, of intelligence, of the religious principle, of moral sentiment, of the elegant and useful arts, of the triumphs of man over nature and himself. Instead of this, we have records of men in power, often weak, oftener wicked, who did little or nothing for the advancement of their age, who were in no sense its representatives, whom the accident of birth perhaps raised to influence. We have the quarrels of courtiers, the intrigues of cabinets, sieges and battles, royal births and deaths, and the secrets of a palace,—that sink of lewdness and corruption. These are the staples of history. The inventions of printing, of gunpowder, and the mariner's compass, were too mean affairs for history to trace. She was bowing before kings and warriors. She had volumes for the plots and quarrels of Leicester and Essex in the reign of Elizabeth, but not a page for Shakspeare; and if Bacon had not filled an office, she would hardly have recorded his name, in her anxiety to preserve the deeds and sayings of that Solomon of his age, James the First.

We have spoken of the supreme importance which is attached to rulers and government, as a

prejudice; and we think that something may be done towards abating the passion for power, by placing this thought in a clearer light. It seems to us not very difficult to show, that to govern men is not as high a sphere of action as has been commonly supposed; and that those who have obtained this dignity, have usurped a place beyond their due in history and men's minds. We apprehend, indeed, that we are not alone in this opinion; that a change of sentiment on this subject has commenced, and must go on; that men are learning that there are higher sources of happiness and more important agents in human affairs than political rule. It is one mark of the progress of society, that it brings down the public man and raises the private one. It throws power into the hands of untitled individuals, and spreads it through all orders of the community. It multiplies and distributes freely means of extensive influence, and opens new channels by which the gifted mind, in whatever rank or condition, may communicate itself far and wide. Through the diffusion of education and printing, a private man may now speak to multitudes, incomparably more numerous than ancient or modern eloquence ever electrified in the popular assembly or the hall of legislation. By these instruments, truth is asserting her sovereignty over nations, without the help of rank, office, or sword; and her faithful ministers will become more and more the lawgivers of the world.

We mean not to deny, we steadily affirm, that government is a great good, and essential to human happiness; but it does its good chiefly by a negative influence, by repressing injustice and crime, by securing property from invasion, and thus removing obstructions to the free exercise of human powers. It confers little positive benefit. Its office is, not to confer happiness, but to give men opportunity to work out happiness for themselves. Government resembles the wall which surrounds our lands;—a needful protection, but rearing no harvests, ripening no fruits. It is the individual who must choose whether the inclosure shall be a paradise or a waste. How little positive good can government confer! It does not till our fields, build our houses, weave the ties which bind us to our families, give disinterestedness to the heart, or energy to the intellect and will. All our great interests are left to ourselves; and governments, when they have interfered with them, have obstructed much more than advanced them. For example, they have taken religion into their keeping only to disfigure it. So education, in their hands, has generally become a propagator of servile maxims, and an upholder of antiquated errors. In like manner they have paralyzed trade by their nursing care, and multiplied poverty by expedients for its relief. Government has almost always been a barrier against which intellect has had to struggle; and society has made its chief progress by the minds of private individuals,

who have outstripped their rulers, and gradually shamed them into truth and wisdom.

Virtue and intelligence are the great interests of a community, including all others and worth all others; and the noblest agency is that by which they are advanced. Now we apprehend that political power is not the most effectual instrument for their promotion, and accordingly we doubt whether government is the only or highest sphere for superior minds. Virtue, from its very nature, cannot be a product of what may be called the direct operation of government, that is, of legislation. Laws may repress crime. Their office is to erect prisons for violence and fraud. But moral and religious worth, dignity of character, loftiness of sentiment, all that makes man a blessing to himself and society, lies beyond their province. Virtue is of the soul, where laws cannot penetrate. Excellence is something too refined, spiritual, celestial, to be produced by the coarse machinery of government. Human legislation addresses itself to self-love, and works by outward force. Its chief instrument is punishment. It cannot touch the springs of virtuous feelings, of great and good deeds. Accordingly, rulers, with all their imagined omnipotence, do not dream of enjoining by statute, philanthropy, gratitude, devout sentiment, magnanimity, and purity of thought. Virtue is too high a concern for government. It is an inspiration of God, not a creature of law; and the agents whom God chiefly honours in its promo-

tion, are those who, through experience as well as meditation, have risen to generous conceptions of it, and who show it forth, not in empty eulogies, but in the language of deep conviction, and in lives of purity.

Government then does little to advance the chief interest of human nature by its direct agency; and what shall we say of its indirect? Here we wish not to offend; but we must be allowed to use that plainness of speech which becomes Christians and freemen. We do fear then, that the indirect influence of government is on the whole adverse to virtue; and in saying this, we do not speak of other countries, or of different political institutions from our own. We do not mean to say, what all around us would echo, that monarchy corrupts a state; that the air of a court reeks with infection, and taints the higher classes with a licentiousness which descends to their inferiors. We speak of government at home; and we ask wise men to say, whether it ministers most to vice or virtue. We fear, that here, as elsewhere, political power is of corrupting tendency; and that, generally speaking, public men are not the most effectual teachers of truth, disinterestedness, and incorruptible integrity to the people. An error prevails in relation to political concerns which necessarily makes civil institutions demoralizing. It is deeply rooted, the growth of ages. We refer to the belief, that public men are absolved in a measure from the everlasting and immutable ob-

ligations of morality; that political power is a prize which justifies arts and compliances that would be scorned in private life; that management, intrigue, hollow pretensions, and appeals to base passions, deserve slight rebuke when employed to compass political ends. Accordingly the laws of truth, justice, and philanthropy, have seldom been applied to public as to private concerns. Even those individuals who have come to frown indignantly on the machinations, the office seeking, and the sacrifices to popularity, which disgrace our internal condition, are disposed to acquiesce in a crooked or ungenerous policy towards foreign nations, by which great advantages may accrue to their own country. Now the great truth on which the cause of virtue rests, is, that rectitude is an eternal, unalterable, and universal law, binding at once heaven and earth, the perfection of God's character, and the harmony and happiness of the rational creation; and in proportion as political institutions unsettle this great conviction—in proportion as they teach that truth, justice and philanthropy are local, partial obligations, claiming homage from the weak, but shrinking before the powerful—in proportion as they thus insult the awful and inviolable majesty of the Eternal Law,—in the same proportion they undermine the very foundation of a people's virtue.

In regard to the other great interest of the community, its intelligence, government may do much good by a direct influence; that is, by instituting

schools or appropriating revenue for the instruction of the poorer classes. Whether it would do wisely in assuming to itself, or in taking from individuals, the provision and care of higher literary institutions, is a question not easily determined. But no one will doubt that it is a noble function to assist and develope the intellect in those classes of the community, whose hard condition exposes them to a merely animal existence. Still the agency of government, in regard to knowledge, is necessarily superficial and narrow. The great sources of intellectual power and progress to a people, are its strong and original thinkers, be they found where they may. Government cannot, and does not, extend the bounds of knowledge; cannot make experiments in the laboratory, explore the laws of animal or vegetable nature, or establish the principles of criticism, morals, and religion. The energy which is to carry forward the intellect of a people, belongs chiefly to private individuals, who devote themselves to lonely thought, who worship truth, who originate the views demanded by their age, who help us to throw off the yoke of established prejudices, who improve on old modes of education or invent better. It is true that great men at the head of affairs may, and often do, contribute much to the growth of a nation's mind. But it too often happens that their station obstructs rather than aids their usefulness. Their connection with a party, and the habit of viewing subjects in reference to

personal aggrandizement, too often obscure the noblest intellects, and convert into patrons of narrow views and temporary interests those who, in other conditions, would have been the lights of their age, and the propagators of everlasting truth.——From these views of the limited influence of government on the most precious interests of society, we learn that political power is not the noblest power, and that in the progress of intelligence it will cease to be coveted as the chief and most honourable distinction on earth.

If we pass now to the consideration of that interest, over which government is expected chiefly to watch, and on which it is most competent to act with power, we shall not arrive at a result very different from what we have just expressed. We refer to property, or wealth. That the influence of political institutions on this great concern is important, inestimable, we mean not to deny. But as we have already suggested, it is chiefly negative. Government enriches a people by removing obstructions to their powers, by defending them from wrong, and thus giving them opportunity to enrich themselves. Government is not the spring of the wealth of nations, but their own sagacity, industry, enterprise, and force of character. To leave a people to themselves, is generally the best service their rulers can render. Time was, when sovereigns fixed prices and wages, regulated industry and expense, and imagined that a nation would starve and perish if it were not guided and guarded like an infant. But

we have learned, that men are their own best guardians, that property is safest under its owner's care, and that generally speaking, even great enterprises can better be accomplished by the voluntary association of individuals than by the state. Indeed, we are met at every stage of this discussion by the truth, that political power is a weak engine compared with *individual* intelligence, virtue, and effort; and we are the more anxious to enforce this truth, because, through an extravagant estimate of government, men are apt to expect from it what they must do for themselves, and to throw upon it the blame which belongs to their own feebleness and improvidence. The great hope of society is individual character. Civilization and political institutions are themselves sources of not a few evils, which nothing but the intellectual and moral energy of the private citizen can avert or relieve. Such, for example, are the monstrous inequalities of property, the sad contrasts of condition, which disfigure a large city; which laws create and cannot remove; which can only be mitigated and diminished by a principle of moral restraint in the poorer classes, and by a wise beneficence in the rich. The great lesson for men to learn is, that their happiness is in their own hands; that it is to be wrought out by their own faithfulness to God and conscience; that no outward institutions can supply the place of inward principle, of moral energy, whilst this can go far to supply the place of almost every outward aid.

Our remarks will show that our estimate of political institutions is more moderate than the prevalent one; and that we regard the power for which ambition has woven so many plots and shed so much blood, as destined to occupy a more and more narrow space among the means of usefulness and distinction. There is, however, one branch of government, which we hold in high veneration, which we account an unspeakable blessing, and which, for the world, we would not say a word to disparage; and we are the more disposed to speak of it, because its relative importance seems to us little understood:—we refer to the Judiciary, a department worth all others in the state. Whilst politicians expend their zeal on transient interests, which perhaps derive their chief importance from their connection with a party, it is the province of the Judge to apply those solemn and universal laws of rectitude, on which the security, industry, and prosperity of the individual and the state essentially depend. From his tribunal, as from a sacred oracle, go forth the responses of justice. To us there is nothing in the whole fabric of civil institutions so interesting and imposing, as this authoritative exposition of the everlasting principles of moral legislation. The administration of justice in this country, where the judge, without a guard, without a soldier, without pomp, decides upon the dearest interests of the citizen, trusting chiefly to the moral sentiment of the

community for the execution of his decrees, is the most beautiful and encouraging aspect, under which our government can be viewed. We repeat it, there is nothing in public affairs so venerable as the voice of Justice, speaking through her delegated ministers, reaching and subduing the high as well as the low, setting a defence around the splendid mansion of wealth and the lowly hut of poverty, repressing wrong, vindicating innocence, humbling the oppressor, and publishing the rights of human nature to every human being. We confess that we often turn with pain and humiliation from the hall of Congress, where we see the legislator forgetting the majesty of his function, forgetting his relation to a vast and growing community, and sacrificing to his party or to himself the public weal; and it comforts us to turn to the court of justice, where the dispenser of the laws, shutting his ear against all solicitations of friendship or interest, dissolving for a time every private tie, forgetting public opinion, and withstanding public feeling,—asks only what is RIGHT. To our courts, the resorts and refuge of weakness and innocence, we look with hope and joy. We boast, with a virtuous pride, that no breath of corruption has as yet tainted their pure air. To this department of government we cannot ascribe too much importance. Over this, we cannot watch too jealously. Every encroachment on its independence we should resent and repel as the chief wrong our

country can sustain. Woe, woe to the impious hand which would shake this most sacred and precious column of the social edifice.

In the remarks which we have now submitted to our readers, we have treated of great topics, if not worthily, yet we trust with a pure purpose. We have aimed to expose the passion for dominion, the desire of ruling mankind. We have laboured to show the superiority of moral power and influence to that sway which has for ages been seized with eager and bloody hands. We have laboured to hold up to unmeasured reprobation, him who would establish an empire of brute force over rational beings. We have laboured to hold forth, as the enemy of his race, the man who in any way would fetter the human mind, and subject other wills to his own. In a word, we have desired to awaken others and ourselves to a just self-reverence, to the free use and expansion of our highest powers, and especially to that moral force, that energy of holy, virtuous purpose, without which we are slaves amidst the freest institutions. Better gifts than these we cannot supplicate from God; nor can we consecrate our lives to nobler acquisitions.

REMARKS

ON THE

CHARACTER AND WRITINGS

OF

JOHN MILTON;

OCCASIONED BY THE

PUBLICATION OF HIS LATELY DISCOVERED

'TREATISE ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.'

THE discovery of a work of Milton, unknown to his own times, is an important event in literary history. The consideration, that we of this age are the first readers of this treatise, naturally heightens our interest in it; for we seem in this way to be brought nearer to the author, and to sustain the same relation which his cotemporaries bore to his writings. The work opens with a salutation, which, from any other man, might be chargeable with inflation; but which we feel to be the natural and appropriate expression of the spirit of Milton. Endowed with gifts of the soul, which have been imparted to few of our race, and conscious of having consecrated them through life to God and mankind, he rose without effort or affectation to the style of an Apostle.—'JOHN MILTON, TO ALL THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST,

ENT TO ALL WHO PROFESS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, PEACE, AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE TRUTH, AND ETERNAL SALVATION IN GOD THE FATHER, AND IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.' Our ears are the first to hear this benediction, and it seems not so much to be borne to us from a distant age, as to come immediately from the sainted spirit by which it was indited.

Without meaning to disparage the 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine,' we may say that it owes very much of the attention which it has excited, to the fame of its author. We value it chiefly as showing us the mind of Milton on that subject which above all others presses upon men of thought and sensibility. We want to know in what conclusions such a man rested after a life of extensive and profound research, of magnanimous efforts for freedom and his country, and of communion with the most gifted minds of his own and former times. The book derives its chief interest from its author, and accordingly there seems to be a propriety in introducing our remarks upon it with some notice of the character of Milton. We are not sure that we could have abstained from this subject, even if we had not been able to offer so good an apology for attempting it. The intellectual and moral qualities of a great man are attractions not easily withstood, and we can hardly serve others or ourselves more, than by recalling to him the attention, which is scattered among inferior topics.

In speaking of the *intellectual* qualities of Milton, we may begin with observing, that the very splendour of his poetic fame has tended to obscure or conceal the extent of his mind, and the variety of its energies and attainments. To many he seems only a poet, when in truth he was a profound scholar, a man of vast compass of thought, imbued thoroughly with all ancient and modern learning, and able to master, to mould, to impregnate with his own intellectual power, his great and various acquisitions. He had not learned the superficial doctrine of a later day,—that poetry flourishes most in an uncultivated soil, and that imagination shapes its brightest visions from the mists of a superstitious age; and he had no dread of accumulating knowledge, lest it should oppress and smother his genius. He was conscious of that within him, which could quicken all knowledge, and wield it with ease and might; which could give freshness to old truths and harmony to discordant thoughts; which could bind together by living ties and mysterious affinities the most remote discoveries; and rear fabrics of glory and beauty from the rude materials which other minds had collected. Milton had that universality which marks the highest order of intellect. Though accustomed almost from infancy to drink at the fountains of classical literature, he had nothing of the pedantry and fastidiousness which disdain all other draughts. His healthy mind delighted in genius, on whatever soil or in whatever age it burst

forth and poured out its fulness. He understood too well the rights, and dignity, and pride of creative imagination, to lay on it the laws of the Greek or Roman school. Parnassus was not to him the only holy ground of genius. He felt that poetry was as a universal presence. Great minds were every where his kindred. He felt the enchantment of Oriental fiction, surrendered himself to the strange creations of 'Araby the blest,' and delighted still more in the romantic spirit of chivalry, and in the tales of wonder in which it was embodied. Accordingly his poetry reminds us of the ocean, which adds to its own boundlessness contributions from all regions under heaven. Nor was it only in the department of imagination, that his acquisitions were vast. He travelled over the whole field of knowledge, as far as it had then been explored. His various philological attainments were used to put him in possession of the wisdom stored in all countries, where the intellect had been cultivated. The natural philosophy, metaphysics, ethics, history, theology and political science of his own and former times, were familiar to him. Never was there a more unconfined mind, and we would cite Milton as a practical example of the benefits of that universal culture of intellect, which forms one distinction of our times, but which some dread as unfriendly to original thought. Let such remember, that mind is in its own nature diffusive. Its object is the universe, which is strictly one, or bound together by infinite connections and

correspondencies; and accordingly its natural progress is from one to another field of thought; and wherever original power, creative genius exists, the mind, far from being distracted or oppressed by the variety of its acquisitions, will see more and more common bearings and hidden and beautiful analogies in all the objects of knowledge, will see mutual light shed from truth to truth, and will compel, as with a kingly power, whatever it understands, to yield some tribute of proof, or illustration, or splendour, to whatever topic it would unfold.

Milton's fame rests chiefly on his poetry, and to this we naturally give our first attention. By those who are accustomed to speak of poetry as light reading, Milton's eminence in this sphere may be considered only as giving him a high rank among the contributors to public amusement. Not so thought Milton. Of all God's gifts of intellect, he esteemed poetical genius the most transcendent. He esteemed it in himself as a kind of inspiration, and wrote his great works with something of the conscious dignity of a prophet. We agree with Milton in his estimate of poetry. It seems to us the divinest of all arts; for it is the breathing or expression of that principle or sentiment, which is deepest and sublimest in human nature; we mean, of that thirst or aspiration, to which no mind is wholly a stranger, for something purer and lovelier, something more powerful, lofty, and thrilling than ordinary and real life affords. No doctrine is more common among

Christians than that of man's immortality; but it is not so generally understood, that the germs or principles of his whole future being are *now* wrapped up in his soul, as the rudiments of the future plant in the seed. As a necessary result of this constitution, the soul, possessed and moved by these mighty though infant energies, is perpetually stretching beyond what is present and visible, struggling against the bounds of its earthly prison-house, and seeking relief and joy in imaginings of unseen and ideal being. This view of our nature, which has never been fully developed, and which goes further towards explaining the contradictions of human life than all others, carries us to the very foundation and sources of poetry. He, who cannot interpret by his own consciousness what we now have said, wants the true key to works of genius. He has not penetrated those sacred recesses of the soul, where poetry is born and nourished, and inhales immortal vigour, and wings herself for her heavenward flight. In an intellectual nature, framed for progress and for higher modes of being, there must be creative energies, powers of original and ever growing thought; and poetry is the form in which these energies are chiefly manifested. It is the glorious prerogative of this art, that it 'makes all things new' for the gratification of a divine instinct. It indeed finds its elements in what it actually sees and experiences, in the worlds of matter and mind; but it combines and blends these into new forms and according to new

affinities; breaks down, if we may so say, the distinctions and bounds of nature; imparts to material objects life, and sentiment, and emotion, and invests the mind with the powers and splendours of the outward creation; describes the surrounding universe in the colours which the passions throw over it, and depicts the mind in those modes of repose or agitation, of tenderness or sublime emotion, which manifest its thirst for a more powerful and joyful existence. To a man of a literal and prosaic character, the mind may seem lawless in these workings; but it observes higher laws then it transgresses, the laws of the immortal intellect; it is trying and developing its best faculties; and in the objects which it describes, or in the emotions which it awakens, anticipates those states of progressive power, splendour, beauty and happiness, for which it was created.

We accordingly believe that poetry, far from injuring society, is one of the great instruments of its refinement and exaltation. It lifts the mind above ordinary life, gives it a respite from depressing cares, and awakens the consciousness of its affinity with what is pure and noble. In its legitimate and highest efforts, it has the same tendency and aim with Christianity; that is, to spiritualize our nature. True; poetry has been made the instrument of vice, the pander of bad passions; but when genius thus stoops, it dims its fires, and parts with much of its power; and even when poetry is enslaved to licen-

tiousness or misanthropy, she cannot wholly forget her true vocation. Strains of pure feeling, touches of tenderness, images of innocent happiness, sympathies with suffering virtue, bursts of scorn or indignation at the hollowness of the world, passages true to our moral nature, often escape in an immoral work, and show us how hard it is for a gifted spirit to divorce itself wholly from what is good. Poetry has a natural alliance with our best affections. It delights in the beauty and sublimity of the outward creation and of the soul. It indeed portrays with terrible energy the excesses of the passions; but they are passions which show a mighty nature, which are full of power, which command awe, and excite a deep though shuddering sympathy. Its great tendency and purpose is, to carry the mind beyond and above the beaten, dusty, weary walks of ordinary life; to lift it into a purer element, and to breathe into it more profound and generous emotion. It reveals to us the loveliness of nature, brings back the freshness of youthful feeling, revives the relish of simple pleasures, keeps unquenched the enthusiasm which warmed the spring-time of our being, refines youthful love, strengthens our interest in human nature by vivid delineations of its tenderest and loftiest feelings, spreads our sympathies over all classes of society, knits us by new ties with universal being, and through the brightness of its prophetic visions helps faith to lay hold on the future life.

We are aware, that it is objected to poetry, that it gives wrong views and excites false expectations of life, peoples the mind with shadows and illusions, and builds up imagination on the ruins of wisdom. That there is a wisdom, against which poetry wars, the wisdom of the senses, which makes physical comfort and gratification the supreme good, and wealth the chief interest of life, we do not deny; nor do we deem it the least service which poetry renders to mankind, that it redeems them from the thraldom of this earthborn prudence. But, passing over this topic, we would observe, that the complaint against poetry as abounding in illusion and deception, is in the main groundless. In many poems there is more of truth than in many histories and philosophic theories. The fictions of genius are often the vehicles of the sublimest verities, and its flashes often open new regions of thought, and throw new light on the mysteries of our being. In poetry the letter is falsehood, but the spirit is often profoundest wisdom. And if truth thus dwells in the boldest fictions of the poet, much more may it be expected in his delineations of life; for the present life, which is the first stage of the immortal mind, abounds in the materials of poetry, and it is the high office of the bard to detect this divine element among the grosser labours and pleasures of our earthly being. The present life is not wholly prosaic, precise, tame and finite. To the gifted eye, it abounds in the poetic. The affections which

spread beyond ourselves and stretch far into futurity; the workings of mighty passions, which seem to arm the soul with an almost superhuman energy; the innocent and irrepressible joy of infancy; the bloom, and buoyancy, and dazzling hopes of youth; the throbbings of the heart, when it first wakes to love, and dreams of a happiness too vast for earth; woman, with her beauty, and grace, and gentleness, and fulness of feeling, and depth of affection, and her blushes of purity, and the tones and looks which only a mother's heart can inspire;—these are all poetical. It is not true that the poet paints a life which does not exist. He only extracts and concentrates, as it were, life's ethereal essence, arrests and condenses its volatile fragrance, brings together its scattered beauties, and prolongs its more refined but evanescent joys; and in this he does well; for it is good to feel that life is not wholly usurped by cares for subsistence, and physical gratifications; but admits, in measures which may be indefinitely enlarged, sentiments and delights worthy of a higher being. This power of poetry to refine our views of life and happiness is more and more needed as society advances. It is needed to withstand the encroachments of heartless and artificial manners, which make civilization so tame and uninteresting. It is needed to counteract the tendency of physical science, which being now sought, not as formerly for intellectual gratification, but for multiplying bodily comforts, requires a new development of ima-

gination, taste and poetry, to preserve men from sinking into an earthly, material, epicurean life.—Our remarks in vindication of poetry have extended beyond our original design. They have had a higher aim than to assert the dignity of Milton as a poet, and that is, to endear and recommend this divine art to all who reverence and would cultivate and refine their nature.

In delineating Milton's character as a *poet*, we are saved the necessity of looking far for its distinguishing attributes. His name is almost identified with sublimity. He is in truth the sublimest of men. He rises, not by effort or discipline, but by a native tendency and a godlike instinct to the contemplation of objects of grandeur and awfulness. He always moves with a conscious energy. There is no subject so vast or terrific, as to repel or intimidate him. The overpowering grandeur of a theme kindles and attracts him. He enters on the description of the infernal regions with a fearless tread, as if he felt within himself a power to erect the prison-house of fallen spirits, to encircle them with flames and horrors worthy of their crimes, to call forth from them shouts which should 'tear hell's concave,' and to embody in their Chief an Archangel's energies and a Demon's pride and hate. Even the stupendous conception of Satan seems never to oppress his faculties. This character of power runs through all Milton's works. His descriptions of nature show a

free and bold hand. He has no need of the minute, graphic skill, which we prize in Cowper or Crabbe. With a few strong or delicate touches, he impresses, as it were, his own mind on the scenes which he would describe, and kindles the imagination of the gifted reader to clothe them with the same radiant hues under which they appeared to his own.

This attribute of power is universally felt to characterize Milton. His sublimity is in every man's mouth. Is it felt that his poetry breathes a sensibility and tenderness hardly surpassed by its sublimity? We apprehend that the grandeur of Milton's mind has thrown some shade over his milder beauties; and this it has done not only by being more striking and imposing, but by the tendency of vast mental energy to give a certain calmness to the expression of tenderness and deep feeling. A great mind is the master of its own enthusiasm, and does not often break out into those tumults, which pass with many for the signs of profound emotion. Its sensibility, though more intense and enduring, is more self-possessed, and less perturbed than that of other men, and is therefore less observed and felt, except by those who understand, through their own consciousness, the workings and utterance of genuine feeling. We might quote pages in illustration of the qualities here ascribed to Milton. Turn to Comus, one of his earliest productions. What sensibility breathes in the descriptions of the benighted Lady's singing, by Comus and the Spirit!

COMUS.

Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breathe such divine enchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that breast,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testify his hidden residence:
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven down
Of darkness till it smil'd! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flow'ry-kirtled Naiades,
Culling their potent herbs and baleful drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium; Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause:
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madness robb'd it of itself;
But such a sacred, and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. Lines 244—264.

SPIRIT.

At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wish'd she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displac'd. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. Lines 555—563.

In illustration of Milton's tenderness, we will open almost at a venture.

Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl,
When Adam wak'd, so custom'd, for his sleep

Was aery-light, from pure digestion bred,
And temp'rate vapours bland, which th' only sound
Of leaves and fuming rills, Aurora's fan,
Lightly dispers'd, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough; so much the more
His wonder was to find unwaken'd Eve
With tresses discompos'd, and glowing cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he on his side
Leaning half rais'd, with looks of cordial love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beauty, which whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces; then with voice
Mild, as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whisper'd thus. Awake,
My fairest, my espous'd, my latest found,
Heav'n's last best gift, my ever new delight,
Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tender plants, how blows the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.

Par. Lost, b. v. lines 1—25.

So cheer'd he his fair spouse, and she was cheer'd,
But silently a gentle tear let fall
From either eye, and wip'd them with her hair;
Two other precious drops that ready stood,
Each in their crystal sluice, he ere they fell
Kiss'd, as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
And pious awe, that fear'd to have offended.

Ibid. b. v. lines 129—135.

From this very imperfect view of the qualities of Milton's poetry, we hasten to his great work, Paradise Lost, perhaps the noblest monument of human genius. The two first books, by universal consent, stand pre-eminent in sublimity. Hell and Hell's

King have a terrible harmony, and dilate into new grandeur and awfulness, the longer we contemplate them. From one element, 'solid and liquid fire,' the poet has framed a world of horror and suffering, such as imagination had never traversed. But fiercer flames, than those which encompass Satan, burn in his own soul. Revenge, exasperated pride, consuming wrath, ambition though fallen, yet unconquered by the thunders of the Omnipotent, and grasping still at the empire of the universe,—these form a picture more sublime and terrible than Hell. Hell yields to the spirit which it imprisons. The intensity of its fires reveals the intenser passions and more vehement will of Satan; and the ruined Archangel gathers into himself the sublimity of the scene which surrounds him. This forms the tremendous interest of these wonderful books. We see mind triumphant over the most terrible powers of nature. We see unutterable agony subdued by energy of soul. We have not indeed in Satan those bursts of passion, which rive the soul as well as shatter the outward frame of Lear. But we have a depth of passion which only an Archangel could manifest. The all-enduring, all-defying pride of Satan, assuming so majestically Hell's burning throne, and coveting the diadem, which scorches his thunder-blasted brow, is a creation requiring in its author almost the spiritual energy with which he invests the fallen seraph. Some have doubted whether the moral effect of such delineations of the storms and terrible workings of

the soul is good; whether the interest felt in a spirit so transcendently evil as Satan, favours our sympathies with virtue. But our interest fastens, in this and like cases, on what is not evil. We gaze on Satan with an awe not unmixed with mysterious pleasure, as on a miraculous manifestation of the *power of mind*. What chains us, as with a resistless spell, in such a character, is spiritual might made visible by the racking pains which it overpowers. There is something kindling and ennobling in the consciousness, however awakened, of the energy which resides in mind; and many a virtuous man has borrowed new strength from the force, constancy, and dauntless courage of evil agents.

Milton's description of Satan attests in various ways the power of his genius. Critics have often observed, that the great difficulty of his work was to reconcile the spiritual properties of his supernatural beings with the human modes of existence, which he was obliged to ascribe to them; and the difficulty is too great for any genius wholly to overcome, and we must acknowledge that our enthusiasm is in some parts of the poem checked by a feeling of incongruity between the spiritual agent, and his sphere and mode of agency. But we are visited with no such chilling doubts and misgivings in the description of Satan in Hell. Imagination has here achieved its highest triumph, in imparting a character of reality and truth to its most daring creations. That world of horrors, though material,

is yet so remote from our ordinary nature, that a spiritual being, exiled from heaven, finds there an appropriate home. There is, too, an indefiniteness in the description of Satan's person, which incites without shocking the imagination, and aids us to combine in our conception of him the massiness of a real form with the vagueness of spiritual existence. To the production of this effect much depends on the first impression given by the poet; for this is apt to follow us through the whole work; and here we think Milton eminently successful. The first glimpse of Satan is given us in the following lines, which, whilst too indefinite to provoke the scrutiny of the reason, fill the imagination of the reader with a form which can hardly be effaced.

> Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate
> With head up-lift above the wave, and eyes
> That sparkling blaz'd, his other parts besides
> Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
> Lay floating many a rood, * * *
>
> Par. Lost, b. i. lines 192—196.

> Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
> His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
> Driv'n backward, slope their pointing spires, and roll'd
> In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
>
> Ibid. 221—224.

We have more which we should gladly say of the delineation of Satan; especially of the glimpses which are now and then given of his deep anguish and despair, and of the touches of better feelings which are skilfully thrown into the dark picture, both suited and designed to blend with our admira-

tion, dread, and abhorrence, a measure of that sympathy and interest with which every living, thinking being ought to be regarded, and without which all other feelings tend to sin and pain. But there is another topic which we cannot leave untouched. From Hell we flee to Paradise, a region as lovely as Hell is terrible, and which to those who do not know the universality of true genius, will appear doubly wonderful, when considered as the creation of the same mind which had painted the infernal world.

Paradise and its inhabitants are in sweet accordance, and together form a scene of tranquil bliss, which calms and soothes, whilst it delights the imagination. Adam and Eve, just moulded by the hand, and quickened by the breath of God, reflect in their countenances and forms, as well as minds, the intelligence, benignity, and happiness of their author. Their new existence has the freshness and peacefulness of the dewy morning. Their souls, unsated and untainted, find an innocent joy in the youthful creation, which spreads and smiles around them. Their mutual love is deep, for it is the love of young, unworn, unexhausted hearts, which meet in each other the only human objects on whom to pour forth their fulness of affection; and still it is serene, for it is the love of happy beings, who know not suffering even by name, whose innocence excludes not only the tumults but the thought of jealousy and shame, who, imparadised in one another's

arms,' scarce dream of futurity, so blessed is their present being. We will not say that we envy our first parents; for we feel that there may be higher happiness than theirs, a happiness won through struggle with inward and outward foes, the happiness of power and moral victory, the happiness of disinterested sacrifices and wide-spread love, the happiness of boundless hope, and of 'thoughts which wander through eternity.' Still there are times, when the spirit, oppressed with pain, worn with toil, tired of tumult, sick at the sight of guilt, wounded in its love, baffled in its hope, and trembling in its faith, almost longs for the 'wings of a dove, that it might fly away' and take refuge amidst the 'shady bowers,' the 'vernal airs,' the 'roses without thorns,' the quiet, the beauty, the loveliness of Eden. It is the contrast of this deep peace of Paradise with the storms of life, which gives to the fourth and fifth books of this poem a charm so irresistible, that not a few would sooner relinquish the two first books, with all their sublimity, than part with these. It has sometimes been said, that the English language has no good pastoral poetry. We would ask, in what age or country has the pastoral reed breathed such sweet strains as are borne to us on 'the odoriferous wings of gentle gales' from Milton's Paradise?

We should not fulfil our duty, were we not to say one word on what has been justly celebrated, the harmony of Milton's versification. His numbers

have the prime charm of expressiveness. They vary with, and answer to the depth, or tenderness, or sublimity of his conceptions, and hold intimate alliance with the soul. Like Michael Angelo, in whose hands the marble was said to be flexible, he bends our language, which foreigners reproach with hardness, into whatever forms the subject demands. All the treasures of sweet and solemn sound are at his command. Words, harsh and discordant in the writings of less gifted men, flow through his poetry in a full stream of harmony. This power over language is not to be ascribed to Milton's musical ear. It belongs to the soul. It is a gift or exercise of genius, which has power to impress itself on whatever it touches, and finds or frames in sounds, motions, and material forms, correspondences and harmonies with its own fervid thoughts and feelings.

We close our remarks on Milton's poetry with observing, that it is characterized by seriousness. Great and various as are its merits, it does not discover all the variety of genius, which we find in Shakspeare, whose imagination revelled equally in regions of mirth, beauty and terror, now evoking spectres, now sporting with fairies, and now 'ascending the highest heaven of invention.' Milton was cast on times too solemn and eventful, was called to take part in transactions too perilous, and had too perpetual need of the presence of high thoughts and motives, to indulge himself in light and gay creations, even had his genius been more flexible and

sportive. But Milton's poetry, though habitually serious, is always healthful, and bright, and vigorous. It has no gloom. He took no pleasure in drawing dark pictures of life; for he knew by experience, that there is a power in the soul to transmute calamity into an occasion and nutriment of moral power and triumphant virtue. We find nowhere in his writings that whining sensibility and exaggeration of morbid feeling, which makes so much of modern poetry effeminating. If he is not gay, he is not spirit-broken. His L'Allegro proves, that he understood thoroughly the bright and joyous aspects of nature; and in his Penseroso, where he was tempted to accumulate images of gloom, we learn that the saddest views which he took of creation, are such as inspire only pensive musing or lofty contemplation.

From Milton's poetry, we turn to his *prose*. We rejoice that the dust is beginning to be wiped from his prose writings, and that the public are now learning, what the initiated have long known, that these contain passages hardly inferior to his best poetry, and that they are throughout marked with the same vigorous mind, which gave us Paradise Lost. The attention to these works has been discouraged by some objections, on which we shall bestow a few remarks.

And first, it is objected to his prose writings, that the style is difficult and obscure, abounding in

involutions, transpositions and latinisms; that his protracted sentences exhaust and weary the mind, and too often yield it no better recompense, than confused and indistinct perceptions. We mean not to deny that these charges have some grounds; but they seem to us much exaggerated; and when we consider that the difficulties of Milton's style have almost sealed up his prose writings, we cannot but lament the fastidiousness and effeminacy of modern readers. We know that simplicity and perspicuity are important qualities of style; but there are vastly nobler and more important ones; such as energy and richness, and in these Milton is not surpassed. The best style is not that which puts the reader most easily and in the shortest time in possession of a writer's naked thoughts; but that which is the truest image of a great intellect, which conveys fully and carries furthest into other souls the conceptions and feelings of a profound and lofty spirit. To be universally intelligible is not the highest merit. A great mind cannot, without injurious constraint, shrink itself to the grasp of common passive readers. Its natural movement is free, bold and majestic, and it ought not to be required to part with these attributes, that the multitude may keep pace with it. A full mind will naturally overflow in long sentences, and in the moment of inspiration, when thick-coming thoughts and images crowd upon it, will often pour them forth in a splendid confusion, dazzling to common readers, but kin-

dling to congenial spirits. There are writings which are clear through their shallowness. We must not expect in the ocean the transparency of the calm inland stream. For ourselves, we love what is called easy reading perhaps too well, especially in our hours of relaxation; but we love too to have our faculties tasked by master spirits. We delight in long sentences, in which a great truth, instead of being broken up into numerous periods, is spread out in its full proportions, is irradiated with variety of illustration and imagery, is set forth in a splendid affluence of language, and flows, like a full stream, with a majestic harmony which fills at once the ear and the soul. Such sentences are worthy and noble manifestations of a great and far-looking mind, which grasps at once vast fields of thought, just as the natural eye takes in at a moment wide prospects of grandeur and beauty. We would not indeed have all compositions of this character. Let abundant provision be made for the common intellect. Let such writers as Addison (an honoured name) 'bring down philosophy from heaven to earth.' But let inspired genius fulfil its higher function of lifting the prepared mind from earth to heaven. Impose upon it no strict laws, for it is its own best law. Let it speak in its own language, in tones which suit its own ear. Let it not lay aside its natural port, or dwarf itself that it may be comprehended by the surrounding multitude. If not understood and relished now, let it place a generous confidence

in other ages, and utter oracles, which futurity will expound. We are led to these remarks not merely for Milton's justification, but because our times seem to demand them. Literature we fear is becoming too popular. The whole community is now turned into readers, and in this we heartily rejoice; and we rejoice too that so much talent is employed in making knowledge accessible to all. We hail the general diffusion of intelligence as the brightest feature of the present age. But good and evil are never disjoined; and one bad consequence of the multitude of readers is, that men of genius are too anxious to please the multitude, and prefer a present shout of popularity to that less tumultuous, but deeper, more thrilling note of the trump of fame, which resounds and grows clearer and louder through all future ages.

We now come to a much more serious objection to Milton's prose writings, and that is, that they are disfigured by party spirit, coarse invective, and controversial asperity; and here we are prepared to say, that there are passages in these works which every admirer of his character must earnestly desire to expunge. Milton's alleged virulence was manifested towards private and public foes. The first, such as Salmasius and Morus, deserved no mercy, they poured out on his spotless character torrents of calumny, charging him with the blackest vices of the heart and the foulest enormities of the life. It ought to be added, that the manners and spirit of

Milton's age justified a retaliation on such offenders, which the more courteous, and, we will hope, more christian spirit of the present times will not tolerate. Still we mean not to be his apologists. Milton, raised as he was above his age, and fortified with the consciousness of high virtue, ought to have been both to his own and future times an example of christian equanimity. In regard to the public enemies whom he assailed, we mean the despots in church and state, and the corrupt institutions which had stirred up a civil war, the general strain of his writings, though strong and stern, must exalt him, notwithstanding his occasional violence, among the friends of civil and religious liberty. That liberty was in peril. Great evils were struggling for perpetuity, and could only be broken down by great power. Milton felt, that interests of infinite moment were at stake; and who will blame him for binding himself to them with the whole energy of his great mind, and for defending them with fervour and vehemence? We must not mistake christian benevolence, as if it had but one voice, that of soft entreaty. It can speak in piercing and awful tones. There is constantly going on in our world a conflict between good and evil. The cause of human nature has always to wrestle with foes. All improvement is a victory won by struggles. It is especially true of those great periods which have been distinguished by revolutions in government and religion, and from which we date the most rapid movements of

the human mind, that they have been signalized by conflict. Thus Christianity convulsed the world and grew up amidst storms; and the reformation of Luther was a signal to universal war; and Liberty in both worlds has encountered opposition, over which she has triumphed only through her own immortal energies. At such periods, men gifted with great power of thought and loftiness of sentiment are especially summoned to the conflict with evil. They hear, as it were, in their own magnanimity and generous aspirations, the voice of a divinity; and thus commissioned, and burning with a passionate devotion to truth and freedom, they must and will speak with an indignant energy; and they ought not to be measured by the standard of ordinary men in ordinary times. Men of natural softness and timidity, of a sincere, but effeminate virtue, will be apt to look on these bolder, hardier spirits, as violent, perturbed, and uncharitable; and the charge will not be wholly groundless. But that deep feeling of evils, which is necessary to effectual conflict with them, and which marks God's most powerful messengers to mankind, cannot breathe itself in soft and tender accents. The deeply moved soul will speak strongly, and ought to speak so as to move and shake nations.

We have offered these remarks as strongly applicable to Milton. He reverenced and loved human nature, and attached himself to its great interests with a fervour of which only such a mind was ca-

pable. He lived in one of those solemn periods which determine the character of ages to come. His spirit was stirred to its very centre by the presence of danger. He lived in the midst of the battle. That the ardour of his spirit sometimes passed the bounds of wisdom and charity, and poured forth unwarrantable invective, we see and lament. But the purity and loftiness of his mind break forth amidst his bitterest invectives. We see a noble nature still. We see that no feigned love of truth and freedom was a covering for selfishness and malignity. He did indeed love and adore uncorrupted religion, and intellectual liberty, and let his name be enrolled among their truest champions.

Milton has told us in his own noble style, that he entered on his principal controversy with episcopacy reluctantly and only through a deep conviction of duty. The introduction to the second book of his 'Reasons of Church Government,' shows us the workings of his mind on this subject, and is his best vindication from the charge we are now repelling. He says—

'Surely to every good and peaceable man, it must in nature needs be a hateful thing, to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him, doubtless, to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness. But when God commands to take the trumpet, and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say, or what he shall conceal. * * * This I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against

that man that should be the author of so foul a deed; or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents, which God at that present had lent me; I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach. Timorous and ungrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest; what matters it for thee or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hast read, or studied, to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hadst the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified; but when the cause of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast; from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee. *** But now by this little diligence, mark what a privilege I have gained with good men and saints, to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the church, if she should suffer, when others that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honour to be admitted mourners. But if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my heirs. Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelaty, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a preventive fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours.'—Vol. I. p. 115—117.*

* From the Introduction to the second book of 'The Reason of Church Government,' &c. Vol. I. p. 114, &c. of Symmons's edition of Milton's Prose-Works, to which all our references are made.

He then goes on to speak of his consciousness of possessing great poetical powers, which he was most anxious to cultivate. Of these he speaks thus magnificently.

'These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power,—to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue, and public civility; to allay the perturbations of the mind, and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's Almightiness, and what he works, and what he suffers to be wrought with high providence in his church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ: to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship; lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without; or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within; all these things with a solid and treatable smoothness to paint out and describe.'—Vol. I. p. 120.

He then gives intimations of his having proposed to himself a great poetical work; 'a work,' he says,

'Not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher fury of a rhyming parasite; nor to be obtained by the invocation of dame memory and her siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.'—Vol. I. p. 122.

He then closes with a passage, showing from

what principles he forsook these delightful studies for controversy.

'I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies. * * * But were it the meanest underservice, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back; for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help, ease and lighten the difficult labours of the church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions; till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either strait perjure, or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.'—Vol. I. p. 123.

These passages, replete with Milton's genius and greatness of soul, show us the influences and motives under which his prose works were written, and help us to interpret passages, which, if taken separately, might justify us in ascribing to him a character of excessive indignation and scorn.

Milton's most celebrated prose work is his 'Areopagitica, or a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing,' a noble work indeed, a precious manual of freedom, an arsenal of immortal weapons for the defence of man's highest prerogative, intellectual liberty. His 'Reformation in England' and 'Reasons of Church Government,' are the most impor-

tant theological treatises published during his life. They were his earliest prose compositions, and thrown off with much haste, and on these accounts are more chargeable with defects of style than any other of his writings. But these, with all their defects, abound in strong and elevated thought, and in power and felicity of expression. Their great blemish is an inequality of style, often springing from the conflict and opposition of the impulses under which he wrote. It is not uncommon to find in the same sentence his affluent genius pouring forth magnificent images and expressions, and suddenly his deep scorn for his opponents, suggesting and throwing into the midst of this splendour, sarcasms and degrading comparisons altogether at variance with the general strain. From this cause, and from negligence, many powerful passages in his prose writings are marred by an incongruous mixture of unworthy allusions and phrases.—In the close of his first work, that on 'Reformation in England,' he breaks out into an invocation and prayer to the Supreme Being, from which we extract a passage containing a remarkable intimation of his having meditated some great poetical enterprise from his earliest years, and giving full promise of that grandeur of thought and language, which characterizes Paradise Lost. Having 'lifted up his hands to that eternal and propitious throne, where nothing is readier than grace and refuge to the distresses of mortal suppliants,' and besought God to

perfect the work of civil and religious deliverance begun in England, he proceeds thus:

'Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, *some one may perhaps be heard* offering at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most christian people, at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly, that by their labours, counsels, and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal addition of principalities, legions, and thrones into their glorious titles; and in supereminence of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss, in over-measure forever.'—Vol. I. pp. 58, 59.

We have not time to speak of Milton's political treatises. We close our brief remarks on his prose writings, with recommending them to all, who can enjoy great beauties in the neighbourhood of faults, and who would learn the compass, energy, and richness of our language; and still more do we recommend them to those, who desire to nourish in their breasts magnanimity of sentiment and an unquenchable love of freedom. They bear the impress of that seal, by which genius distinguishes its productions from works of learning and taste. The great

and decisive test of genius is, that it calls forth *power* in the souls of others. It not merely gives knowledge, but breathes energy. There are authors, and among these Milton holds the highest rank, in approaching whom we are conscious of an access of intellectual strength. A 'virtue goes out' from them. We discern more clearly, not merely because a new light is thrown over objects, but because our own vision is strengthened. Sometimes a single word, spoken by the voice of genius, goes far into the heart. A hint, a suggestion, an undefined delicacy of expression, teaches more than we gather from volumes of less gifted men. The works which we should chiefly study, are not those which contain the greatest fund of knowledge, but which raise us into sympathy with the intellectual energy of the author, and in which a great mind multiplies itself, as it were, in the reader. Milton's prose works are imbued as really, if not as thoroughly, as his poetry, with this quickening power, and they will richly reward those who are receptive of this influence.

We now leave the writings of Milton to offer a few remarks on his *moral* qualities. His moral character was as strongly marked as his intellectual, and it may be expressed in one word, *magnanimity*. It was in harmony with his poetry. He had a passionate love of the higher, more commanding, and majestic virtues, and fed his youthful mind with meditations on the perfection of a human being.

In a letter written to an Italian friend before his thirtieth year, and translated by Hayley, we have this vivid picture of his aspirations after virtue.

'As to other points, what God may have determined for me I know not; but this I know, that if he ever instilled an intense love of moral beauty into the breast of any man, he has instilled it into mine. Ceres in the fable pursued not her daughter with a greater keenness of inquiry, than I day and night the idea of perfection. Hence, wherever I find a man despising the false estimates of the vulgar, and daring to aspire in sentiment, language and conduct, to what the highest wisdom, through every age, has taught us as most excellent, to him I unite myself by a sort of necessary attachment; and if I am so influenced by nature or destiny, that by no exertion or labours of my own I may exalt myself to this summit of worth and honour, yet no powers of heaven or earth will hinder me from looking with reverence and affection upon those, who have thoroughly attained this glory, or appeared engaged in the successful pursuit of it.'

His Comus was written in his twenty-sixth year; and on reading this exquisite work our admiration is awakened, not so much by observing how the whole spirit of poetry had descended on him at that early age, as by witnessing, how his whole youthful soul was penetrated, awed and lifted up by the austere charms, 'the radiant light,' the invincible power, the celestial peace of saintly virtue. He reverenced moral purity and elevation, not only for its own sake, but as the inspirer of intellect, and especially of the higher efforts of poetry. 'I was confirmed,' he says, in his usual noble style,

'I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pat

tern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing of high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.'—Vol. I. p. 224.

We learn from his works, that he used his multifarious reading to build up within himself this reverence for virtue. Ancient history, the sublime musings of Plato, and the heroic self-abandonment of chivalry, joined their influences with prophets and apostles, in binding him 'everlastingly in willing homage' to the great, the honourable, and the lovely in character. A remarkable passage to this effect we quote from his account of his youth.

'I betook me among those lofty fables and romances, which recount in solemn cantos, the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life, if it so befel him, the honour and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn; *** So that even these books, which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and steadfast observation of virtue.'—Ibid.

All Milton's habits were expressive [illegible] and self-denying character. When charged by his unprincipled slanderers with licentious habits, he thus gives an account of his morning hours.

'Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping, or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake

men to labour, or to devotion; in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught; then with useful and generous labours preserving the body's health and hardiness to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather than to see the ruin of our protestation, and the enforcement of a slavish life.' —Vol. I. p. 220.

We have enlarged on the strictness and loftiness of Milton's virtue, not only from our interest in the subject, but that we may put to shame and silence those men who make genius an apology for vice, and take the sacred fire, kindled by God within them, to inflame men's passions, and to minister to a vile sensuality.

We see Milton's greatness of mind in his fervent and constant attachment to liberty. Freedom in all its forms and branches was dear to him, but especially freedom of thought and speech, of conscience and worship, freedom to seek, profess and propagate truth. The liberty of ordinary politicians, which protects men's outward rights, and removes restraints to the pursuit of property and outward good, fell very short of that, for which Milton lived and was ready to die. The tyranny which he hated most, was that which broke the intellectual and moral power of the community. The worst feature of the institutions which he assailed was, that they fettered the mind. He felt within himself, that the human mind had a principle of perpetual growth, that it —

was essentially diffusive and made for progress, and he wished every chain broken, that it might run the race of truth and virtue with increasing ardour and success. This attachment to a spiritual and refined freedom, which never forsook him in the hottest controversies, contributed greatly to protect his genius, imagination, taste and sensibility, from the withering and polluting influences of public station, and of the rage of parties. It threw a hue of poetry over politics, and gave a sublime reference to his service of the commonwealth. The fact that Milton, in that stormy day, and amidst the trials of public office, kept his high faculties undepraved, was a proof of no common greatness. Politics, however they make the intellect active, sagacious, and inventive, within a certain sphere, generally extinguish its thirst for universal truth, paralyse sentiment and imagination, corrupt the simplicity of the mind, destroy that confidence in human virtue, which lies at the foundation of philanthropy and generous sacrifices, and end in cold and prudent selfishness. Milton passed through a revolution, which, in its last stages and issue, was peculiarly fitted to damp enthusiasm, to scatter the visions of hope, and to infuse doubts of the reality of virtuous principle; and yet the ardour, and moral feeling, and enthusiasm of his youth came forth unhurt, and even exalted from the trial.

Before quitting the subject of Milton's devotion to liberty, it ought to be recorded, that he wrote his

celebrated 'Defence of the People of England' after being distinctly forewarned by his physicians, that the effect of this exertion would be the utter loss of sight. His reference to this part of his history in a short poetical effusion is too characteristic to be withheld. It is inscribed to Cyriac Skinner, the friend to whom he appears to have confided his lately discovered 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine.'

'Cyriac, this three years day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light their seeing have forgot,
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heav'n's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, Friend, to have lost them overply'd
In liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content though blind, had I no better guide.'—*Sonnet* XXII.

We see Milton's magnanimity in the circumstances under which Paradise Lost was written. It was not in prosperity, in honour, and amidst triumphs, but in disappointment, desertion, and in what the world calls disgrace, that he composed that work. The cause, with which he had identified himself, had failed. His friends were scattered; *liberty* was trodden under foot; and her devoted champion was a by-word among the triumphant royalists. But it is the prerogative of true great-

ness to glorify itself in adversity, and to meditate and execute vast enterprises in defeat. Milton, fallen in outward condition, afflicted with blindness, disappointed in his best hopes, applied himself with characteristic energy to the sublimest achievement of intellect, solacing himself with great thoughts, with splendid creations, and with a prophetic confidence, that however neglected in his own age, he was framing in his works a bond of union and fellowship with the illustrious spirits of a brighter day. We delight to contemplate him in his retreat and last years. To the passing spectator, he seemed fallen and forsaken, and his blindness was reproached as a judgment from God. But though sightless, he lived in light. His inward eye ranged through universal nature, and his imagination shed on it brighter beams than the sun. Heaven, and Hell, and Paradise were open to him. He visited past ages, and gathered round him ancient sages and heroes, prophets and apostles, brave knights and gifted bards. As he looked forward, ages of liberty dawned and rose to his view, and he felt, that he was about to bequeath to them an inheritance of genius 'which would not fade away,' and was to live in the memory, reverence and love of remotest generations.

We have enlarged on Milton's character not only from the pleasure of paying that sacred debt, which the mind owes to him who has quickened and delighted it, but from an apprehension that Milton has

not yet reaped his due harvest of esteem and veneration. The mists, which the prejudices and bigotry of Johnson spread over his bright name, are not yet wholly scattered, though fast passing away. We wish not to disparage Johnson. We could find no pleasure in sacrificing one great man to the manes of another. But we owe it to Milton and to other illustrious names to say, that Johnson has failed of the highest end of biography, which is to give immortality to virtue, and to call forth fervent admiration towards those who have shed splendour on past ages. We acquit Johnson, however, of intentional misrepresentation. He did not and could not appreciate Milton. We doubt whether two other minds, having so little in common as those of which we are now speaking, can be found in the higher walks of literature. Johnson was great in his own sphere, but that sphere was comparatively of the earth, whilst Milton's was only inferior to that of angels. It was customary in the day of Johnson's glory to call him a Giant, to class him with a mighty but still an earth-born race. Milton we should rank among Seraphs. Johnson's mind acted chiefly on man's actual condition, on the realities of life, on the springs of human action, on the passions which now agitate society, and he seems hardly to have dreamed of a higher state of the human mind than was then exhibited. Milton, on the other hand, burned with a deep yet calm love of moral grandeur and celestial purity. He thought not so much of

what man is, as of what he might become. His own mind was a revelation to him of a higher condition of humanity, and to promote this he thirsted and toiled for freedom, as the element for the growth and improvement of his nature.—In religion Johnson was gloomy and inclined to superstition, and on the subject of government leaned towards absolute power; and the idea of reforming either never entered his mind but to disturb and provoke it. The church and the civil polity under which he lived seemed to him perfect, unless he may have thought that the former would be improved by a larger infusion of Romish rites and doctrines, and the latter by an enlargement of the royal prerogative. Hence a tame acquiescence in the present forms of religion and government marks his works. Hence we find so little in his writings, which is electric and soul-kindling, and which gives the reader a consciousness of being made for a state of loftier thought and feeling than the present. Milton's whole soul, on the contrary, revolted against the maxims of legitimacy, hereditary faith, and servile reverence for established power. He could not brook the bondage to which men had bowed for ages. 'Reformation' was the first word of public warning which broke from his youthful lips, and the hope of it was a fire in his aged breast. The difference between Milton and Johnson may be traced not only in these great features of mind, but in their whole characters. Milton was refined and spiritual in his habits, tem-

perate almost to abstemiousness, and refreshed himself after intellectual effort by music. Johnson inclined to more sensual delights. Milton was exquisitely alive to the outward creation, to sounds, motions, and forms, to natural beauty and grandeur. Johnson, through defect of physical organization, if not through deeper deficiency, had little susceptibility of these pure and delicate pleasures, and would not have exchanged the Strand for the vale of Tempe or the gardens of the Hesperides. How could Johnson be just to Milton! The comparison, which we have instituted, has compelled us to notice Johnson's defects. But we trust we are not blind to his merits. His stately march, his pomp and power of language, his strength of thought, his reverence for virtue and religion, his vigorous logic, his practical wisdom, his insight into the springs of human action, and the solemn pathos which occasionally pervades his descriptions of life and his references to his own history, command our willing admiration. That he wanted enthusiasm, and creative imagination, and lofty sentiment, was not his fault. We do not blame him for not being Milton. We love intellectual power in all its forms, and delight in the variety of mind. We blame him only, that his passions, prejudices, and bigotry engaged him in the unworthy task of obscuring the brighter glory of one of the most gifted and virtuous men. We would even treat what we deem the faults of Johnson with a tenderness approaching respect; for they were

results, to a degree which man cannot estimate, of a diseased, irritable, nervous, unhappy physical temperament, and belonged to the body more than to the mind. We only ask the friends of genius not to put their faith in Johnson's delineations of it. His biographical works are tinged with his notoriously strong prejudices, and of all his 'Lives,' we hold that of Milton to be the most apocryphal.

We here close our general remarks on Milton's intellectual and moral qualities. We venerate him as a man of genius; but still more as a man of magnanimity and Christian virtue, who regarded genius and poetry as sacred gifts, imparted to him not to amuse men, or to build up a reputation, but that he might quicken and call forth what was great and divine in his fellow-creatures, and might secure the only true fame, the admiration of minds which his writings were to kindle and exalt.

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We come now to the examination of the newly discovered 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine.' This work, we have said, owes its chief interest to the character of its author. From its very nature, it cannot engage and fix general attention. It consists very much of collections of texts of scripture, which, however exciting in their proper places, are read with little thought or emotion when taken from their ordinary connexion, and marshalled under systematic heads. Milton aims to give us the doctrines of revelation in its own words. We have them

in a phraseology long familiar to us; and we are disappointed; for we expected to see them, not in the language of the Bible, but as existing in the mind of Milton, modified by his peculiar intellect and sensibility, combined and embodied with his various knowledge, illustrated by the analogies, brightened by the new lights, and clothed with the associations with which they were surrounded by this gifted man. We hoped to see these doctrines as they were viewed by Milton in his moments of solemn feeling and deep contemplation, when they pervaded and moved his whole soul. Still there are passages in which Milton's mind is laid open to us. We refer to the parts of the work, where the peculiarity of his opinions obliges him to state his reasons for adopting them; and these we value highly, for the vigour and independence of intellect with which they are impressed. The work is plain and unambitious in style. Its characteristics are a calm earnestness, and that profound veneration for scripture, which certain denominations of Christians, who have little congeniality with Milton, seem to claim as a monopoly.

His introduction is worthy every man's attention, as a deliberate, mild assertion of the dearest right of human nature, that of free inquiry.

'If I communicate the result of my inquiries to the world at large; if, as God is my witness, it be with a friendly and benignant feeling towards mankind, that I readily give as wide a circulation as possible to what I esteem my best and richest pos-

session, I hope to meet with a candid reception from all parties, and that none at least will take unjust offence, even though many things should be brought to light, which will at once be seen to differ from certain received opinions. I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth, not to cry out that the church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry, which is granted to the schools, and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered *to prove all things*, and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive far less of disturbance to the church, than of illumination and edification.'—Vol. I. pp. 5, 6.

'It has also been my object to make it appear from the opinions I shall be found to have advanced, whether new or old, of how much consequence to the christian religion is the liberty, not only of winnowing and sifting every doctrine, but also of thinking and even writing respecting it, according to our individual faith and persuasion; an inference which will be stronger in proportion to the weight and importance of those opinions, or rather in proportion to the authority of scripture, on the abundant testimony of which they rest. Without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel—force alone prevails,—by which it is disgraceful for the christian religion to be supported. Without this liberty we are still enslaved, not indeed, as formerly, under the divine law, but, what is worst of all, under the law of man, or to speak more truly, under a barbarous tyranny.'—Vol. I. pp. 7, 8.

On that great subject, the character of God, Milton has given nothing particularly worthy of notice, except that he is more disposed than Christians in general, to conceive of the Supreme Being under the forms and affections of human nature.

'If God habitually assign to himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to him what he attributes to himself, so long as what is imperfection and weakness, when viewed in reference to ourselves, be considered as most complete and excellent whenever it is imputed to God.'—Vol. I. p. 23.

Milton is not the first Christian, who has thought to render the Supreme Being more interesting by giving him human shape. We doubt the wisdom of this expedient. To spiritualize our conceptions of him, seems to us the true process for strengthening our intimacy with him; for in this way only can we think of him as immediately present to our minds. As far as we give him a material form, we must assign to him a place, and that place will almost necessarily be a distant one, and thus we shall remove him from the soul which is his true temple. Besides, a definite form clashes with God's infinity, which is his supreme distinction, and on no account to be obscured; for strange as it may seem to those who know not their own nature, this incomprehensible attribute, is that, which above all things constitutes the correspondence or adaptation, if we may so speak, of God to the human mind.

In treating of God's Efficiency, Milton strenuously maintains human freedom, in opposition to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. He maintains, that God's decrees do not encroach on moral liberty; for our free agency is the very object decreed and predestined by the Creator. He maintains that some of the passages of scripture, which speak of election, are to be understood of an election to outward privileges, not to everlasting life; and that in other texts, which relate to the future state, the election spoken of is not an arbitrary choice of individuals, but of that class or description of persons, be it

large or small, who shall comply with the prescribed terms of salvation; in other words, it is a conditional, not an absolute election, and such that every individual, if he will, may be included in it. Milton has so far told us truth. We wish we could add, that he had thrown new light on free agency. This great subject has indeed baffled as yet the deepest thinkers, and seems now to be consigned with other sublime topics, under the sweeping denomination of metaphysics, to general neglect. But let it not be given up in despair. The time is coming, when the human intellect is to strike into new fields, and to view itself, and its Creator, and the universe from new positions, and we trust that the darkness which has so long hung over our moral nature will be gradually dispersed. This attribute of free agency, through which an intelligent being is strictly and properly a cause, an agent, an originator of moral good or moral evil, and not a mere machine, determined by outward influences or by a secret yet resistless efficiency of God, which virtually makes Him the author and only author of all human actions,—this moral freedom, which is the best image of the creative energy of the Deity, seems to us the noblest object of philosophical investigation. However questioned and darkened by a host of metaphysicians, it is recognised in the common consciousness of every human being. It is the ground of responsibility, the fountain of moral feeling. It is involved in all moral judgments and affections, and

thus gives to social life its whole interest; whilst it is the chief tie between the soul and its Creator. The fact, that philosophers have attempted to discard free agency from their explanations of moral phænomena, and to subject all human action to necessity, to mechanical causes, or other extraneous influences, is proof enough, that the science of the mind has as yet penetrated little beneath the surface, that the depths of the soul are still unexplored.

Milton naturally passes from his chapter on the Supreme Being to the consideration of those topics, which have always been connected with this part of theology; we mean, the character of Jesus Christ, and the nature of the Holy Spirit. All our readers are probably aware that Milton has here declared himself an anti-trinitarian, and strenuously asserted the strict and proper unity of God. His chapter on 'The Son of God' is the most elaborate one in the work. His 'prefatory remarks' are highly interesting, as joining with a manly assertion of his right, an affectionate desire to conciliate the Christians from whom he differed.

'I cannot enter upon subjects of so much difficulty as the *Son of God* and the *Holy Spirit*, without again premising a few introductory words. If indeed I were a member of the Church of Rome, which requires implicit obedience to its creed on all points of faith, I should have acquiesced from education or habit in its simple decree and authority, even though it denies that the doctrine of the trinity, as now received, is capable of being proved from any passage of Scripture. But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears to me much

more clearly deducible from the Holy Scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why any one who belongs to the same Protestant or Reformed Church, and professes to acknowledge the same rule of faith as myself, should take offence at my freedom, particularly as I impose my authority on no one, but merely propose what I think more worthy of belief than the creed in general acceptation. I only entreat that my readers will ponder and examine my statements in a spirit which desires to discover nothing but the truth, and with a mind free from prejudice. For without intending to oppose the authority of Scripture, which I consider inviolably sacred, I only take upon myself to refute human interpretations as often as the occasion requires, conformably to my right or rather to my duty as a man. If indeed those with whom I have to contend were able to produce direct attestation from heaven to the truth of the doctrine which they espouse, it would be nothing less than impiety to venture to raise, I do not say a clamour, but so much as a murmur against it. But inasmuch as they can lay claim to nothing more than human powers, assisted by that spiritual illumination which is common to all, it is not unreasonable that they should on their part allow the privileges of diligent research and free discussion to another inquirer, who is seeking truth through the same means and in the same way as themselves, and whose desire of benefiting mankind is equal to their own.'—Vol. I. pp. 103, 104, 105.

Milton teaches, that the Son of God is a distinct being from God, and inferior to him, that he existed before the world was made, that he is the first of the creation of God, and that afterwards, all other things were made by him, as the instrument or minister of his Father. He maintains, in agreement with Dr. Clarke, that the Holy Spirit is a person, an intelligent agent, but created and inferior to God. This opinion of Milton is the more remarkable, because he admits, that before the time of Christ, the Jews, though accustomed to the phrase, Holy Spirit,

never attached to it the idea of personality, and that both in the Old and the New Testament, it is often used to express God himself or his power and agency. It is strange, that after these concessions, he could have found a difficulty in giving a figurative interpretation to the few passages in the New Testament, which speak of the Holy Spirit as a person.

We are unable within our limits to give a sketch of Milton's strong reasoning against the Supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ. We must, however, pause a moment to thank God that he has raised up this illustrious advocate of the long obscured doctrine of the Divine Unity. We can now bring forward the three greatest and noblest minds of modern times, and we may add of the Christian era, as witnesses to that Great Truth, of which in an humbler and narrower sphere, we desire to be the defenders. Our Trinitarian adversaries are perpetually ringing in our ears the names of Fathers and Reformers. We take Milton, Locke and Newton, and place them in our front, and want no others to oppose to the whole array of great names on the opposite side. Before these intellectual suns, the stars of self-named orthodoxy hide their diminished heads. To these eminent men, God communicated such unusual measures of light and mental energy, that their names spring up spontaneously, when we think or would speak of the greatness of our nature. Their theological opinions were the fruits of patient, profound,

reverent study of the Scriptures. They came to this work, with minds not narrowed by a technical, professional education, but accustomed to broad views, to the widest range of thought. They were shackled by no party connections. They were warped by no clerical ambition, and subdued by no clerical timidity. They came to this subject in the fulness of their strength, with free minds open to truth, and with unstained purity of life. They came to it, in an age, when the doctrine of the Trinity was instilled by education, and upheld by the authority of the church, and by penal laws. And what did these great and good men, whose intellectual energy and love of truth have made them the chief benefactors of the human mind,—what, we ask, did they discover in the Scriptures? a triple divinity? three infinite agents? three infinite objects of worship? three persons, each of whom possesses his own distinct offices, and yet shares equally in the godhead with the rest? No! Scripture joined with nature and with that secret voice in the heart, which even idolatry could not always stifle, and taught them to bow reverently before the One Infinite Father, and to ascribe to Him alone supreme, self-existent Divinity.—Our principal object in these remarks has been to show, that as far as great names are arguments, the cause of anti-trinitarianism, or of God's proper Unity, is supported by the strongest. But we owe it to truth to say, that we put little trust in these fashionable proofs. The chief use of great names in religious

controversy is to balance and neutralize one another, that the unawed and unfettered mind may think and judge with a due self-reverence, and with a solemn sense of accountableness to God alone.

We have called Milton an anti-trinitarian. But we have no desire to identify him with any sect. His mind was too independent and universal to narrow itself to human creeds and parties. He is supposed to have separated himself in his last years from all the denominations around him; and were he now living, we are not sure that he would find one to which he would be strongly attracted. He would probably stand first among that class of Christians, more numerous than is supposed, and, we hope, increasing, who are too jealous of the rights of the mind, and too dissatisfied with the clashing systems of the age, to attach themselves closely to any party; in whom the present improved state of theology has created a consciousness of defect, rather than the triumph of acquisition; who, however partial to their own creed, cannot persuade themselves, that it is the ultimate attainment of the human mind, and that distant ages will repeat its articles as reverently as the Catholics do the decrees of Trent; who contend earnestly for free inquiry, not because all who inquire will think as they do, but because some at least may be expected to outstrip them, and to be guides to higher truth. With this nameless and spreading class, we have strong sympathies. We want new light, and care not whence it comes; we want re-

formers worthy of the name; and we should rejoice in such a manifestation of Christianity, as would throw all present systems into obscurity.

We come now to a topic, on which Milton will probably startle a majority of readers. He is totally opposed, as were most of the ancient philosophers, to the doctrine of God's creating the universe out of nothing. He maintains, that there can be no action without a passive material on which the act is exerted, and that accordingly the world was framed out of a pre-existent matter. To the question, what and whence is this primary matter? he answers, it is from God, 'an efflux of the Deity.' 'It proceeded from God,' and consequently no additional existence was produced by creation, nor is matter capable of annihilation. A specimen of his speculations on this subject is given in the following quotation.

'It is clear then that the world was framed out of matter of some kind or other. For since action and passion are relative terms, and since, consequently, no agent can act externally, unless there be some patient, such as matter, it appears impossible that God could have created this world out of nothing; not from any defect of power on his part, but because it was necessary that something should have previously existed capable of receiving passively the exertion of the divine efficacy. Since, therefore, both Scripture and reason concur in pronouncing that all these things were made, not out of nothing, but out of matter, it necessarily follows, that matter must either have always existed independently of God, or have originated from God at some particular point of time. That matter should have been always independent of God, (seeing that it is only a passive principle, dependent on the Deity, and subservient to him; and seeing, moreover, that as in number, considered abstractly, so also in time or eternity there is no inherent

force or efficacy,) that matter, I say, should have existed of itself from all eternity, is inconceivable. If on the contrary it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains, therefore, but one solution of the difficulty, for which moreover we have the authority of Scripture, namely, that all things are of God.'—Vol. I. pp. 236, 237.

This doctrine naturally led Milton to another, viz. that there is no ground for the supposed distinction between body and soul; for if matter is an 'efflux of the Deity,' it is plainly susceptible of intellectual functions. Accordingly our author affirms,

'That man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable, not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body,—but the whole man is soul, and the soul man, that is to say, a body, or substance individual, animated, sensitive, and rational.'—Vol. I. pp. 250, 251.

We here learn that a passage in Paradise Lost, which we have admired as poetry, was deemed by Milton sound philosophy.

'O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
All things proceed, and up to him return,
If not deprav'd from good, created all
Such to perfection, *one first matter all*,
Indued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
But more refin'd, more spiritous, and pure,
As nearer to him plac'd, or nearer tending
Each in their several active spheres assign'd,
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
Proportion'd to each kind. So from the root
Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
More aery, last the bright consummate flower
Spirits odorous breathes; flow'rs and their fruit,

Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublim'd,
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
To *intellectual*.' Par. Lost, b. v. lines 469—485.

These speculations of Milton will be received in this age with more favour or with less aversion, than in his own; for, from the time of Locke, the discussions of philosophers have tended to unsettle our notions of matter, and no man is hardy enough now to say, what it is, or what it may not be. The idealism of Berkeley, though it has never organized a sect, has yet sensibly influenced the modes of thinking among metaphysicians; and the coincidence of this system with the theory of certain Hindoo philosophers, may lead us to suspect, that it contains some great latent truth, of which the European and Hindoo intellect, so generally at variance, have caught a glimpse. Matter is indeed a Proteus, which escapes us at the moment we hope to seize it. Priestley was anxious to make the soul material; but for this purpose, he was obliged to change matter from a substance into a power, that is, into no matter at all; so that he destroyed, in attempting to diffuse it. We have thrown out these remarks, to rescue Milton's memory from the imputation, which he was the last man to deserve, of irreverence towards God; for of this some will deem him guilty in tracing matter to the Deity as its fountain. Matter, which seems to common people so intelligible, is still wrapt in mystery. We know it only by its relation to mind, or as an assemblage

of powers to awaken certain sensations. Of its relation to God, we may be said to know nothing. Perhaps, as knowledge advances, we shall discover that the Creator is bound to his works by stronger and more intimate ties, than we now imagine. We do not then quarrel with such suggestions as Milton's, though we cannot but wonder at the earnestness with which he follows out such doubtful speculations.

Milton next proceeds to the consideration of man's state in Paradise; and as marriage was the only social relation then subsisting, he introduces here his views of that institution, and of polygamy, and divorce. These views show, if not the soundness, yet the characteristic independence of his mind. No part of his book has given such offence as his doctrine of the lawfulness of polygamy, and yet no where is he less liable to reproach. It is plain that his error was founded on his reverence for Scripture. He saw that polygamy was allowed to the best men in the Old Testament, to patriarchs before the law, who, he says, were the objects of God's special favour, and to eminent individuals in subsequent ages; and finding no prohibition of it in the New Testament, he believed, that not only holy men would be traduced, but Scripture dishonoured, by pronouncing it morally evil. We are aware that some will say, that the practice *is* condemned in the New Testament; and we grant that it is censured by implication in these words of Christ, 'Who-

soever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.'* But we believe it to be an indisputable fact, that although Christianity was first preached in Asia, which had been from the earliest ages the seat of polygamy, the Apostles never denounced it as a crime, and never required their converts to put away all wives but one. What then? some may say, 'are you too the advocates of the lawfulness of polygamy?' We answer, No. We consider our religion as decidedly hostile to this practice; and we add, what seems to us of great importance, that this hostility is not the less decided, because no express prohibition of polygamy is found in the New Testament; for Christianity is not a system of precise legislation, marking out with literal exactness every thing to be done, and every thing to be avoided; but an inculcation of broad principles, which it entrusts to individuals and to society to be applied according to their best discretion. It is through this generous peculiarity, that Christianity is fitted to be a universal religion. Through this, it can subsist and blend itself with all stages of society, and can live in the midst of abuses, which it silently and powerfully overcomes, but against which it would avail little, were it immediately to lift up the voice of denunciation. We all know, that long cherished corruptions, which have sent their roots through the whole frame of a community, cannot be torn up at

* Matt. xix. 9.

once, without dissolving society. To Christianity is committed the sublime office of eradicating all the errors and evils of the world; but this it does by a process corresponding with man's nature, by working a gradual revolution in the mind, which in its turn works a safe and effectual revolution in manners and life. No argument, therefore, in favour of a practice can be adduced from the fact, that it is not explicitly reprobated in the New Testament. For example, Christianity went forth into communities, where multitudes were held in slavery, and all ranks were ground and oppressed by despotism; abuses on which the spirit of our religion frowns as sternly as on any which can be named. Yet Christianity did not command the master to free his slaves, or the despot to descend from his absolute throne; but satisfied itself with proclaiming sublime truths in regard to God's paternal character and administration, and broad and generous principles of action; leaving to these the work of breaking every chain by a gradual, inward, irresistible influence, and of asserting the essential equality and unalienable rights of the whole human race. —We cannot leave this topic, without adding, that not only Milton's error on polygamy, but many other noxious mistakes, have resulted from measuring Christianity by the condition of the primitive church, as if *that* were the standard of faith and practice, as if every thing allowed then were wise and good, as if the religion were then unfolded in

all its power and extent. The truth is, that Christianity was then in its infancy. The Apostles communicated its great truths to the rude minds of Jews and Heathens; but the primitive church did not and could not understand all that was involved in those principles, all the applications of which they are susceptible, all the influences they were to exert on the human mind, all the combinations they were to form with the new truths which time was to unfold, all the new lights in which they were to be placed, all the adaptations to human nature and to more advanced states of society, which they were progressively to manifest. In the first age the religion was administered with a wise and merciful conformity to the capacities of its recipients. With the progress of intelligence, and the development of the moral faculties, Christianity is freeing itself, and ought to be freed, from the local, temporary and accidental associations of its childhood. Its great principles are coming forth more distinctly and brightly, and condemning abuses and errors, which have passed current for ages. This great truth, for such we deem it, that Christianity is a growing light, and that it must be more or less expounded by every age for itself, was not sufficiently apprehended by Milton; nor is it now understood as it will be. For want of apprehending it, Christianity is administered now too much as it was in ages, when nothing of our literature, philosophy, and spirit of improvement existed; and consequently it does not, we

fear, exert that entire and supreme sway over strong and cultivated minds which is its due, and which it must one day obtain.

Milton has connected with polygamy the subject of divorce, on which he is known to have differed from many Christians. He strenuously maintains in the work under review, and more largely in other treatises, that the violation of the marriage bed is not the sole ground of divorce, but that "the perpetual interruption of peace and affection by mutual differences and unkindness is a sufficient reason," for dissolving the conjugal relation. On this topic we cannot enlarge.

We now arrive at that part of Milton's work, in which his powerful mind might have been expected to look beyond the prevalent opinions of his day, but in which he has followed the beaten road almost without deviation, seldom noticing difficulties, and hardly seeming to know their existence. We refer to the great subjects of the moral condition of mankind, and of redemption by Jesus Christ. The doctrine of original sin he has assumed as true, and his faith in it was evidently strengthened by his doctrine of the identity of the soul with the body, in consequence of which he teaches, that souls are propagated from parents to children, and not immediately derived from God, and that they are born with an hereditary taint, just as the body contracts hereditary disease. It is humiliating to add, that he supports this doctrine of the propagation of sin by

physical contagion, on the ground, that it relieves the Creator from the charge of originating the corruption which we are said to bring into life; as if the infinitely pure and good God could, by a covert agency, infect with moral evil the passive and powerless mind of the infant, and then absolve himself of the horrible work by imputing it to instruments of his own ordination! Milton does not, however, believe in total depravity, feeling that this would free men from guilt, by taking away all power; and he therefore leaves us a portion of the divine image, not enough to give us a chance of virtue, but enough to take away excuse from sin. Such are the 'tender mercies' of theology! With respect to Christ's mediation, he supposes, that Christ saves us by bearing our punishment, and in this way satisfying God's justice. His views indeed are not expressed with much precision, and seem to have been formed without much investigation. On these great subjects, of human nature and redemption, we confess, we are disappointed in finding the spirit of Milton satisfying itself with the degrading notions which prevailed around him. But we remember, that it is the order of Providence, that the greatest minds should sympathize much with their age, and that they contribute the more to the progress of mankind, by not advancing too fast and too far beyond their cotemporaries. In this part of his work, Milton maintains, that the death threatened to sin extends equally to body and soul, which indeed he

was bound to do, as he holds the soul and body to be one; and he then proceeds to defend with his usual power the necessary inference, that all consciousness is suspended between death and the resurrection. We have no faith in this doctrine, but we respect the courage with which he admits and maintains whatever can be fairly deduced from his opinions.

Having concluded the subject of redemption, he passes to what he calls 'man's renovation, or the change whereby the sinner is brought into a state of grace;' and here, though he is not always perspicuous, yet he seldom deviates from what was then the beaten road. We owe it, however, to Milton, to say, that, although he sometimes approached, he never adopted Calvinism. All the distinguishing articles of that creed,—total depravity, election and reprobation, Christ dying for the elect only, irresistible grace, the perseverance of the saints, and justification by mere faith,—all are denied and opposed by him, and some with great strength. Swayed as Milton was by the age in which he lived, his spirit could not be subdued to the heart-withering faith of the Genevan school.

We now come to a subject, in which Milton was deeply interested, we mean Christian Liberty, under which head may be included the discipline of the church, the power of ministers, and the rights of the people. To vindicate the liberty of Christians, and to secure them from all outward impositions

and ordinances, he maintains that the whole Mosaic law is abolished, so that no part is binding on Christians; a doctrine which may startle many who believe that the moral precepts of that law are as binding now as ever. But such persons differ little in reality from Milton, whose true meaning is, that these precepts bind Christians, not through the authority of Moses, which is wholly done away, but only because they are taken up and incorporated into Christianity, which is our only law, and which has set forth whatever was permanently valuable in Judaism in a more perfect form, and with more powerful sanctions.

As another branch of the Liberty of Christians, he maintains, as we may well suppose, the right of every believer to consult the Scriptures and to judge of them for himself. Not satisfied with this, he takes the ground of Quakerism, and maintains that the Christian, in addition to the Scriptures, has an inward guide, with which no human authority should interfere.

'Under the Gospel we possess, as it were, a twofold scripture, one external, which is the written word, and the other internal, which is the Holy Spirit, written in the hearts of believers, according to the promise of God, and with the intent that it should by no means be neglected.' Vol. II. p. 172. 'The external scripture * * * has been liable to frequent corruption, and in some instances has been corrupted, through the number, and occasionally the bad faith of those by whom it has been handed down, the variety and discrepancy of the original manuscripts, and the additional diversity produced by subsequent transcripts and printed editions. But the Spirit which leads to truth cannot be corrupted,

neither is it easy to deceive a man who is really spiritual.' p. 173. 'It is difficult to conjecture the purpose of Providence in committing the writings of the New Testament to such uncertain and variable guardianship, unless it were to teach us by this very circumstance, that the Spirit which is given to us is a more certain guide than Scripture, whom, therefore, it is our duty to follow.' p. 174. 'Hence it follows, that when an acquiescence in human opinions or an obedience to human authority in matters of religion is exacted, in the name either of the church or of the christian magistrate, from those who are themselves led individually by the Spirit of God, this is in effect to impose a yoke, not on man, but on the Holy Spirit itself.' p. 176.

This, in words, is genuine Quakerism; but whether Milton understood by the Holy Spirit that *immediate* revelation, which forms the leading doctrine of that creed, we doubt. To this doctrine it may be objected, and we think Milton must have felt the objection, that it disparages and discourages our faculties, and produces inaction of mind, leading men to expect from a sudden flash from heaven the truth, which we are taught to seek by the right use of our own powers. We imagine, that Milton believed that the Holy Spirit works with and by our own understandings, and, instead of superseding reason, invigorates and extends it. But this is not the only place, where his precise views are obscured by general expressions, or by rapid and superficial notices of subjects.

In Milton's views of the church and the ministry, we have other proofs of his construing the Scriptures in the manner most favourable to Christian Liberty. He teaches that the universal Church has no head but Christ, and that the power arrogated

by popes, councils, and bishops, is gross usurpation. In regard to particular churches he is a strict congregationalist. Each church, he says, is competent to its own government, and connected with others only by the bond of charity. No others are authorized to interfere with any of its concerns, but in the way of brotherly counsel.

'Every church consisting of the above parts,' (i. e. well instructed believers,) 'however small its numbers, is to be considered as in itself an integral and perfect church, so far as regards its religious rights; nor has it any superior on earth, whether individual, or assembly, or convention, to whom it can be lawfully required to render submission; inasmuch as no believer out of its pale, nor any order or council of men whatever, has a greater right than itself to expect a participation in the written word and the promises, in the presence of Christ, in the presiding influence of the Spirit, and in those gracious gifts which are the reward of united prayer.'—Vol. II. p. 193.

The choice of the minister, he says, belongs to the people. The minister, if possible, should serve the church gratuitously, and live by the labour of his own hands. This unpaid service he pronounces more noble and consonant to our Lord's example and that of the Apostles. In accordance with these views, he favours the idea of a church consisting of few members.

'All that pertains to the worship of God and the salvation of believers, all, in short, that is necessary to constitute a church, may be duly and orderly transacted in a particular church, within the walls of a private house, and where the numbers assembled are inconsiderable. Nay, such a church, when in compliance with the interested views of its pastor it allows of an increase of numbers beyond what is convenient, deprives itself of a great

measure of the advantages to be derived from meeting in common.'—Vol. II. p. 194.

He maintains that ministers are not to monopolize public instruction, or the administration of the ordinances; but that all Christians, having sufficient gifts, are to participate in these services.

'The custom of holding assemblies is to be maintained, not after the present mode, but according to the apostolical institution, which did not ordain that an individual, and he a stipendiary, should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that each believer in turn should be authorized to speak, or prophecy, or teach, or exhort, according to his gifts; insomuch that even the weakest amongst the brethren had the privilege of asking questions, and consulting the elders and more experienced members of the congregation.' Vol. II. p. 203. 'Any believer is competent to act as an *ordinary minister*, according as convenience may require, provided only he be endowed with the necessary gifts; these gifts constituting his mission.' p. 153. 'If therefore it be competent to any believer whatever to preach the gospel, provided he be furnished with the requisite gifts, it is also competent to him to administer the right of baptism; inasmuch as the latter office is inferior to the former.' p. 157. 'With regard to the Lord's supper also, it has been shown, in the preceding chapter, that all are entitled to participate in that rite, but that the privilege of dispensing the elements is confined to no particular man, or order of men.' p. 188.

We entirely accord with the spirit of freedom which these passages breathe; but from some of the particular views we dissent. The great error of Milton lies in supposing that the primitive church was meant to be a model for all ages. But can we suppose, that the church at its birth, when it was poor, persecuted, hemmed in by Judaism and Heathenism, supplied imperfectly with written rules and records,

dependent for instruction chiefly on inspired teachers, and composed of converts who had grown up and been steeped in Jewish and Heathen errors,—can we imagine, that in these circumstances the church took a form which it ought to retain as sacred and unalterable, in its triumphs, and prosperity, and diffusion, and in ages of greater light and refinement? We know that in the first ages there were no ministers with salaries, or edifices for public worship. Christians met in private houses, and sometimes in the obscurest they could find. On these occasions, the services were not monopolized by an individual, but shared by the fraternity; nor is there a hint in the New Testament that the administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism was confined to the minister. But in all this we have no rule for the present day. Indeed it seems to us utterly repugnant to the idea of a universal religion, intended for all ages and nations, and for all the progressive states of society to the end of the world, to suppose that in its infancy it established an order of worship, instruction and discipline, which was to remain inviolable in all future times. This doctrine of an inflexible form, seems to us servile, superstitious, and disparaging to Christianity. Our religion is too spiritual and inward, and cares too little about its exterior, to bind itself in this everlasting chain. The acknowledged indefiniteness of the New Testament in regard to this subject, is no mean proof of the enlarged and prospective wisdom of its founder.

We believe, that with the diffusion of liberal views, the question will arise, whether our religion cannot be taught and administered in methods and forms more adapted, than those which now prevail, to its spirit and great design, to the principles of human nature, and to the condition and wants of society. Among the changes which may grow from this discussion, we do not anticipate the adoption of Milton's plan of sentencing ministers to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow; for we think that we see reasons in the general spread of knowledge, for enlarging their means and opportunities of study and intellectual culture, that they may meet the increasing demand for more enlightened inculcation of Christian truth. At the same time, it seems to us not unlikely, that, in conformity to Milton's suggestion, public instruction, instead of continuing to be a monopoly of ministers, may be extended freely to men of superior intelligence and piety, and that the results of this arrangement may be, the infusion of new life, power, and practical wisdom into religious teaching, and the substitution of a more natural, free and various eloquence for the technical and monotonous mode of treating subjects which clings so often and so obstinately to the performances of the pulpit.—Again, we do not expect, among the changes of forms and outward worship, that Christians, to meet our author's views, will shut their churches, and meet in private houses, for large religious edifices and large congregations

seem to us among the important means of collecting and interesting in Christianity the mass of the community. But perhaps narrower associations for religious improvement may be formed, in which the formalities of public worship will be relaxed, and Christians may reap the benefits of the more familiar and confidential meetings of the primitive converts. It is indeed a great question, how the public administration of Christianity, including modes of discipline, instruction and worship, may be rendered more impressive and effectual. This field is almost untrodden; but if we read aright the signs of the times, the day for exploring it draws nigh.

We have said that whilst we dissent from some of Milton's views on the subject of our present remarks, we agree in their spirit. It was evidently the aim of all his suggestions to strip the clergy, as they are called, of that peculiar, artificial sanctity, with which superstition had long arrayed them, and which had made their simple, benignant office, one of the worst instruments of ambition and despotism. We believe that this institution will never exert its true and full power on the church and on the world, until the childish awe, with which it has been viewed, shall be exchanged for enlightened esteem; and until men, instead of expecting from it certain mysterious, undefined influences, shall see in it a rational provision for conveying important truth, and for promoting virtue and happiness, not by

magic, but according to the fixed laws of human nature.

The remainder of the 'Treatise on Christian Doctrine' furnishes topics on which we should willingly remark; but we have only time to glance at the opinions in which Milton differs from the majority. He rejects infant baptism, and argues against it with his usual earnestness and strength. He not only affirms with many other Christians, that the fourth commandment relating to the Sabbath is abolished with the rest of the Mosaic system, but maintains, what few have done, that under the Gospel no time is appointed for public worship, but that the observance of the first day of the week rests wholly on expediency, and on the agreement of Christians. He believes, that Christ is to appear visibly for the judgement of the world, and that he will reign a thousand years on earth, at the end of which period Satan will assail the church with an innumerable confederacy, and be overwhelmed with everlasting ruin. He speaks of the judgment as beginning with Christ's second advent, and as comprehending his whole government through the millennium, as well as the closing scene, when sentence will be pronounced on evil angels, and on the whole human race.—We have now given, we believe, all the peculiarities of Milton's faith. As for that large part of his work, in which he has accumulated scriptural proofs of doctrines and duties in which all Christians are agreed, its ge-

neral tenour may be understood without further remarks.

It may now be asked, what is the value of this book? We prize it chiefly as a testimony to Milton's profound reverence for the christian religion, and an assertion of the freedom and rights of the mind. We are obliged to say, that the work throws little new light on the great subjects of which it treats. Some will say, that this ought not to surprise us; for new light is not to be looked for in the department of theology. But if this be true, our religion may be charged with the want of adaptation to our nature in an essential point; for one of the most striking features of the human mind is its thirst for constantly enlarging knowledge, and its proneness to lose its interest in subjects which it has exhausted. The chief cause of Milton's failure was, that he sought truth too exclusively in the past, and among the dead. He indeed called no man master, and disclaimed the authority of Fathers, and was evidently dissatisfied with all the sects which had preceded or were spread around him. Still he believed in the perfection of the primitive church, and that Christianity, instead of being carried forward, was to be carried *back* to its original purity. To use his own striking language, 'the lovely form of truth,' which Christians at first embraced, 'had been hewn into a thousand pieces, like the mangled body of Osiris,' and scattered to the four winds;' and consequently he believed, that the great duty of her friends was

'to gather up limb by limb, and bring together every joint and member.' In conformity with this doctrine, he acted too much as an eclectic theologian, culling something from almost every sect, and endeavouring to form an harmonious system from materials 'gathered from the four winds.' He would have done better, had he sought truth less in other minds, and more in the communion of his own soul with Scripture, nature, God, and itself. The fact is, that the church, from its beginning, has been imperfect in knowledge and practice, and our business is, not to rest in the past, but to use it as a means of a purer and brighter futurity. Christianity began to be corrupted at its birth, to be debased by earthly mixtures, as soon as it touched the earth. The seeds of that corruption which grew and shot up into the overshadowing despotism of papal Rome, were sown in the age of the Apostles, as we learn in the Epistles; and we infer, from the condition of the world, that nothing but a stupendous moral miracle, subverting all the laws of the human mind, could have prevented their development. Who, that understands human nature, does not know, that old associations are not broken up in a moment; that to minds, plunged in a midnight of error, truth must gradually open like the dawning day; that old views will mingle with the new; that old ideas, which we wish to banish, will adhere to the old words to which they were formerly attached; and that the sudden and entire eradication of long-rooted errors would be

equivalent to the creation of a new intellect? How long did the Apostles, under Christ's immediate tuition, withstand his instructions? Even Peter, after the miraculous illumination of the day of Pentecost, remained ignorant, until the message from Cornelius, of that glorious feature of Christianity, the abolition of the Jewish peculiarity, and the equal participation of the Gentiles with the Jews in the blessings of the Messiah. As soon as Christianity was preached, it was blended with Judaism, which had power to neutralize the authority of Paul in many churches. In like manner, it soon began to be 'spoiled' of its simplicity 'by philosophy and science falsely so called,' and to be encumbered by pagan ceremonies. The first Christians were indeed brought into 'wonderful light,' if their christian state be compared with the darkness from which they had emerged; but not if compared with the perfection of knowledge to which Christ came to exalt the human race. The earliest Fathers, as we learn from their works, were not receptive of large communications of truth. Their writings abound in puerilities and marks of childish credulity, and betray that indistinctness of vision, which is experienced by men, who issue from thick darkness into the light of day. In the ages of barbarism, which followed the fall of the Roman empire, Christianity, though it answered wise purposes of Providence, was more and more disfigured and obscured. The Reformation was in-

deed a glorious era; but glorious for its reduction of papal and clerical power, and for the partial liberation of the mind, rather than for immediate improvements of men's apprehensions of Christianity. Some of the reformers invented or brought back as injurious errors as those they overthrew. Luther's consubstantiation differed from the pope's transubstantiation by a syllable, and that was all the gain; and we may safely say, that transubstantiation was a less monstrous doctrine than the five points of Calvin. How vain, therefore, was Milton's search for 'the mangled Osiris,' for 'the lovely form and immortal features of truth,' in the history of the church!

Let us not be misunderstood, as if we would cut off the present age from the past. We mean not, that Milton should have neglected the labours of his predecessors. He believed justly, that all the periods and generations of the human family are bound together by a sublime connection, and that the wisdom of each age is chiefly a derivation from all preceding ages, not excepting the most ancient; just as a noble stream, through its whole extent and in its widest overflowings, still holds communication with its infant springs, gushing out perhaps in the depths of distant forests, or on the heights of solitary mountains. We only mean to say, that the stream of religious knowledge is to swell and grow through its whole course, and to

receive new contributions from gifted minds in successive generations. We only regret that Milton did not draw more from the deep and full fountains of his own soul. We wish only to teach, that antiquity was the infancy of our race, and that its acquisitions, instead of being rested in, are to bear us onward to new heights of truth and virtue. We mean not to complain of Milton for not doing more. He rendered to mankind a far greater service than that of a teacher of an improved theology. He taught and exemplified that spirit of intellectual freedom, through which all the great conquests of truth are to be achieved, and by which the human mind is to attain to a new consciousness of its sublime facultics, and to invigorate and expand itself forever.

We here close our remarks on Milton. In offering this tribute, we have aimed at something higher than to express and gratify our admiration of an eminent man. We believe that an enlightened and exalted mind is a brighter manifestation of God than the outward universe; and we have set forth, as we have been able, the praises of an illustrious servant of the Most High, that, through him, glory may redound to the Father of all spirits, the Fountain of all wisdom and magnanimous virtue. And still more; we believe that the sublime intelligence of Milton was imparted, not for his own sake only,

but to awaken kindred virtue and greatness in other souls. Far from regarding him as standing alone and unapproachable, we believe that he is an illustration of what all who are true to their nature, will become in the progress of their being; and we have held him forth, not to excite an ineffectual admiration, but to stir up our own and others' breasts to an exhilarating pursuit of high and ever-growing attainments in intellect and virtue.

SERMONS.

SERMON I.

ON THE EVIDENCES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

"*The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*"—JOHN iii. 2.

THE evidences of revealed religion are the subject of this lecture; a subject of great extent, as well as of vast importance. In discussing it, an immense variety of learning has been employed, and all the powers of the intellect have been called forth. History, metaphysics, ethical science, and the science of human nature, have been summoned to the controversy, and have contributed to Christianity the aids of abstract reasoning, of criticism, of ancient learning, and of moral sentiment. To condense into one discourse what scholars and great men have written on this point, is impossible, even if it were desirable; and I have stated the extent of speculation into which our subject has led, not because I propose to give an abstract of others' labours, but because I wish you to understand that

the topic is one not easily despatched, and because I would invite you to follow me in a discussion, which will require concentrated and continued attention. A subject more worthy of attention, than the claims of that religion which was impressed on our childhood, and which is acknowledged to be the only firm foundation of the hope of immortality, cannot be presented; and our minds must want the ordinary seriousness of human nature, if it cannot arrest us.

That Christianity has been opposed, is a fact implied in the establishment of this lecture. That it has had adversaries of no mean intellect, you know. I propose in this discourse, to make some remarks on what seems to me the great objection to Christianity, on the general principle on which its evidences rest, and on some of its particular evidences.

The great objection to Christianity, the only one which has much influence at the present day, meets us at the very threshold. We cannot, if we would, evade it; for it is founded on a primary and essential attribute of the religion. The objection is oftener felt than expressed, and amounts to this,—that miracles are incredible, and that the supernatural character of an alleged fact is proof enough of its falsehood. So strong is this propensity to doubt of departures from the order of nature, that there are sincere Christians who incline to rest their religion wholly on its internal evidence, and to overlook the outward extraordinary interposition of God, by

which it was at first established. But the difficulty cannot in this way be evaded; for Christianity is not only *confirmed* by miracles, but is *in itself*, in its very essence, a miraculous religion. It is not a system, which the human mind gathered, in the ordinary exercise of its powers, from the ordinary course of nature. It professes to be a supernatural communication from God. So that the objection which I have stated still presses upon us; and if it be well grounded, it is fatal to Christianity.

It is proper then to begin the discussion with inquiring, whence the disposition to discredit miracles springs, and how far it is rational. A preliminary remark of some importance is, that this disposition is not a necessary part or principle of our mental constitution, like the disposition to trace effects to adequate causes. We are indeed so framed, as to expect a continuance of that order of nature which we have uniformly experienced; but not so framed as to revolt at alleged violations of that order, and to account them impossible or absurd. On the contrary, take men at large, and they discover a strong and incurable propensity to believe in miracles. Almost all histories, until within the last two centuries, reported seriously supernatural facts. Scepticism, as to miracles, is comparatively a new thing, if we except the epicurean or atheistical sect among the ancients; and so far from being founded in human nature, it is resisted by an almost infinite preponderance of belief on the other side.

Whence then has this scepticism sprung? It may be explained by two principal causes: *First*, It is now an acknowledged fact, among enlightened men, that in past times and in our own, a strong disposition has existed, and still exists, to admit miracles without examination. Human credulity is found to have devoured nothing more eagerly than reports of prodigies. Now it is argued that we discover here a principle of human nature, namely, the love of the supernatural and marvellous, which accounts sufficiently for the belief of miracles, wherever we find it; and that it is consequently unnecessary and unphilosophical to seek for other causes, and especially to admit that most improbable one, the actual existence of miracles. This sweeping conclusion, is a specimen of that rash habit of generalizing, which rather distinguishes our times, and shows that philosophical reasoning has made fewer advances than we are apt to boast. It is true, that there is a principle of credulity as to prodigies in a considerable part of society, a disposition to believe without due scrutiny. But this principle, like every other in our nature, has its limits; acts according to fixed laws; is not omnipotent; cannot make the eyes see, and the ears hear, and the understanding credit delusions, under all imaginable circumstances; but requires the concurrence of various circumstances and of other principles of our nature, in order to its operation. For example, the belief of spectral appearances has been very common; but under

what circumstances, and in what state of mind has it occurred? Do men see ghosts in broad day, and amidst cheerful society? Or in solitary places; in grave-yards; in twilights or mists, where outward objects are so undefined as easily to take a form from imagination; and in other circumstances favourable to terror, and associated with the delusion in question? The principle of credulity is as regular in its operation, as any other principle of the mind; and is so dependent on circumstances, and so restrained and checked by other parts of human nature, that sometimes the most obstinate incredulity is found in that very class of people, whose easy belief on other occasions moves our contempt. It is well known, for example, that the efficacy of the vaccine inoculation has been encountered with much more unyielding scepticism among the vulgar, than among the improved; and in general it may be affirmed, that the credulity of the ignorant operates under the control of their strongest passions and impressions, and that no class of society yield a slower assent to positions, which manifestly subvert their old modes of thinking and most settled prejudices. It is then very unphilosophical to assume this principle as an explanation of all miracles whatever. I grant that the fact, that accounts of supernatural agency so generally prove false, is a reason for looking upon them with peculiar distrust. Miracles ought on this account to be sifted more than common facts. But if we find

that a belief in a series of supernatural works has occurred under circumstances very different from those, under which false prodigies have been received, under circumstances most unfavourable to the operation of credulity; then this belief cannot be resolved into the common causes which have blinded men in regard to supernatural agency. We must look for other causes; and if none can be found but the actual existence of the miracles, then true philosophy binds us to believe them.—I close this head with observing, that the propensity of men to believe in what is strange and miraculous, though a presumption against particular miracles, is not a presumption against miracles universally, but rather the reverse; for great principles of human nature have generally a foundation in truth; and one explanation of this propensity so common to mankind is obviously this, that in the earlier ages of the human race, miraculous interpositions, suited to man's infant state, were not uncommon; and being the most striking facts of human history, they spread through all future times a belief and expectation of miracles.

I now proceed to the *second* cause of the scepticism in regard to supernatural agency, which has grown up, especially among the more improved, in later times. These later times are distinguished, as you well know, by successful researches into nature; and the discoveries of science have continually added strength to that great principle, that

the phænomena of the universe are regulated by general and permanent laws, or that the Author of the universe exerts his power according to an established order. Nature, the more it is explored, is found to be uniform. We observe an unbroken succession of causes and effects. Many phænomena, once denominated irregular, and ascribed to supernatural agency, are found to be connected with preceding circumstances, as regularly as the most common events. The comet, we learn, observes the same attraction as the sun and planets. When a new phænomenon now occurs, no one thinks it miraculous, but believes that, when better understood, it may be reduced to laws already known, or is an example of a law not yet investigated.

Now this increasing acquaintance with the uniformity of nature, begets a distrust of alleged violations of it, and a rational distrust too; for while many causes of mistake in regard to alleged miracles may be assigned, there is but one adequate cause of real miracles,—that is, the power of God; and the regularity of nature forms a strong presumption against the miraculous exertion of this power, except in extraordinary circumstances, and for extraordinary purposes, to which the established laws of the creation are not competent. But the observation of the uniformity of nature not merely begets this rational distrust of alleged violations of it: it produces a secret feeling, as if such violations were impossible. That attention to the powers of nature,

which is implied in scientific research, tends to weaken the practical conviction of a higher power; and the laws of the creation, instead of being regarded as the modes of divine operation, come insensibly to be considered as fetters on his agency, as too sacred to be suspended even by their Author. This secret feeling, essentially atheistical and at war with all sound philosophy, is the chief foundation of that scepticism which prevails in regard to miraculous agency, and deserves our particular consideration.

To a man, whose belief in God is strong and practical, a miracle will appear as possible as any other effect, as the most common event in life; and the argument against miracles, drawn from the uniformity of nature, will weigh with him, only as far as this uniformity is a pledge and proof of the Creator's disposition to accomplish his purposes by a fixed order or mode of operation. Now it is freely granted that the Creator's regard or attachment to such an order may be inferred from the steadiness with which he observes it; and a strong presumption lies against any violation of it on slight occasions, or for purposes to which the established laws of nature are adequate. But this is the utmost which the order of nature authorizes us to infer respecting its Author. It forms no presumption against miracles universally, in all imaginable cases; but may even furnish a presumption in their favour.

We are never to forget, that God's adherence to

the order of the universe is not necessary and mechanical, but intelligent and voluntary. He adheres to it not for its own sake, or because it has a sacredness which compels him to respect it; but simply because it is most suited to accomplish purposes in which he is engaged. It is a means, and not an end; and, like all other means, must give way when the end can best be promoted without it. It is the mark of a weak mind to make an idol of order and method; to cling to established forms of business, when they clog instead of advancing it. If then the great purposes of the universe can best be accomplished by departing from its established laws, these laws will undoubtedly be suspended; and though broken in the letter, they will be observed in their spirit; for the ends, for which they were first instituted, will be advanced by their violation. Now the question arises, For what purposes were nature and its order appointed? and there is no presumption in saying, that the highest of these is the improvement of intelligent beings. Mind, (by which we mean both moral and intellectual powers,) is God's first end. The great purpose, for which an order of nature is fixed is plainly the formation of Mind. In a creation without order, where events would follow without any regular succession, it is obvious that Mind must be kept in perpetual infancy; for in such a universe, there could be no reasoning from effects to causes, no induction to establish general truths, no adaptation of means to ends; that is, no science

relating to God, or matter, or mind; no action; no virtue. The great purpose of God then, I repeat it, in establishing the order of nature, is to form and advance the mind; and if the case should occur in which the interests of the mind could best be advanced by departing from this order, or by miraculous agency, then the great purpose of the creation, the great end of its laws and regularity, would demand such departure; and miracles, instead of warring against, would concur with nature.

Now we Christians maintain, that such a case has existed. We affirm that, when Jesus Christ came into the world, nature had failed to communicate instructions to men, in which, as intelligent beings, they had the deepest concern, and on which the full development of their highest faculties essentially depended; and we affirm, that there was no prospect of relief from nature; so that an exigence had occurred, in which additional communications, supernatural lights, might rationally be expected from the Father of spirits. Let me state two particulars out of many, in which men needed intellectual aids, not given by nature: I refer to the doctrine of one God and Father, on which all piety rests; and to the doctrine of Immortality, which is the great spring of virtuous effort. Had I time to enlarge on the history of that period, I might show you under what heaps of rubbish and superstition these doctrines were buried. But I should repeat only what you know familiarly. The works of ancient genius,

which form your studies, carry on their front the brand of polytheism, and of debasing error on subjects of the first and deepest concern. It is more important to observe, that the very uniformity of nature had some tendency to obscure the doctrines which I have named, or at least to impair their practical power, so that a departure from this uniformity was needed, to fasten them on men's minds.

That a fixed order of nature, though a proof of the One God to reflecting and enlarged understandings, has yet a tendency to hide him from men in general, will appear, if we consider first, that as the human mind is constituted, what is regular and of constant occurrence, excites it feebly; and benefits, flowing to it through fixed unchanging laws, seem to come by a kind of necessity, and are apt to be traced up to natural causes alone. Accordingly religious convictions and feelings, even in the present advanced condition of society, are excited not so much by the ordinary course of God's providence, as by sudden, unexpected events, which rouse and startle the mind, and speak *of* a power higher than nature. There is another way, in which a fixed order of nature is unfavourable to just impressions respecting its Author. It discovers to us in the Creator a regard to *general good*, rather than an affection to *individuals*. The laws of nature, operating, as they do, with an inflexible steadiness, never varying to meet the cases and wants of individuals, and inflicting much private suffering in their stern

administration for general good, give the ideas of a distant, reserved sovereign, much more than of a tender parent; and yet this last view of God is the only effectual security from superstition and idolatry. Nature then would not have brought back the world to its Creator.—And as to the doctrine of Immortality, the order of the natural world had little tendency to teach this, at least with clearness and energy. The natural world contains no provisions or arrangements for reviving the dead. The sun and the rain, which cover the tomb with verdure, send no vital influences to the mouldering body. The researches of science detect no secret processes for restoring the lost powers of life. If man is to live again, he is not to live through any known laws of nature, but by a power higher than nature; and how then can we be *assured* of this truth, but by a manifestation of this power, that is, by miraculous agency confirming a future life?

I have laboured in these remarks to show, that the uniformity of nature is no presumption against miraculous agency, when employed in confirmation of such a religion as Christianity. Nature, on the contrary, furnishes a presumption in its favour. Nature clearly shows to us a power above itself, so that it proves miracles to be possible. Nature reveals purposes and attributes in its Author, with which Christianity remarkably agrees. Nature too has deficiencies, which show that it was not intended by its Author to be his whole method of instruct-

ing mankind; and in this way it gives great confirmation to Christianity, which meets its wants, supplies its chasms, explains its mysteries, and lightens its heart-oppressing cares and sorrows.

Before quitting the general consideration of miracles, I ought to take some notice of Hume's celebrated argument on this subject: not that it merits the attention which it has received, for infidelity has seldom forged a weaker weapon; but because it is specious, and has derived weight from the name of its author. The argument is briefly this,—"That belief is founded upon and regulated by experience. Now we often experience testimony to be false, but never witness a departure from the order of nature. That men may deceive us when they testify to miracles, is therefore more accordant with experience, than that nature should be irregular; and hence there is a balance of proof against miracles, a presumption so strong as to outweigh the strongest testimony."—The usual replies to this argument, I have not time to repeat. Dr. Campbell's work, which is accessible to all, will show you that it rests on an equivocal use of terms; and will furnish you with many fine remarks on testimony, and on the condition or qualities which give it validity. I will only add a few remarks, which seem to me worthy of attention.

1. This argument affirms, that the credibility of facts or statements is to be decided by their accordance with the established order of nature, and by

this standard only. Now if nature comprehended all existences and all powers, this position might be admitted. But if there is a Being higher than nature, the origin of all its powers and motions, and whose character falls under our notice and experience as truly as the creation, then there is an additional standard, to which facts and statements are to be referred; and works, which violate nature's order, will still be credible, if they agree with the known properties and attributes of its Author; because for such works we can assign an adequate cause and sufficient reasons, and these are the qualities and conditions on which credibility depends.

2. This argument of Hume proves too much, and therefore proves nothing. It proves too much; for if I am to reject the strongest testimony to miracles, because testimony has often deceived me, whilst nature's order has never been found to fail, then I ought to reject a miracle, even if I should see it with my own eyes, and if all my senses should attest it; for all my senses have sometimes given false reports, whilst nature has never gone astray; and therefore, be the circumstances ever so decisive or inconsistent with deception, still I must not believe what I see, and hear, and touch; what my senses, exercised according to the most deliberate judgement, declare to be true. All this the argument requires.—And it proves too much; for disbelief, in the case supposed, is out of our power, and is instinctively pronounced absurd: and what

is more, it would subvert that very order of nature on which the argument rests; for this order of nature is learned only by the exercise of my senses and judgement, and if these fail me, in the most unexceptionable circumstances, then their testimony to nature is of little worth.

Once more: this argument is built on an ignorance of the nature of testimony, and it is surprising that this error has not been more strikingly exposed. Testimony, we are told, cannot prove a miracle. Now the truth is, that testimony, of itself and immediately, proves no fact whatever, not even the most common. Testimony can do nothing more than show us the state of another's mind in regard to a given fact. It can only show us that the testifier has a belief, a conviction, that a certain phænomenon or event has occurred. Here testimony stops; and the reality of the event is to be judged altogether from the nature and degree of this conviction, and from the circumstances under which it exists. This conviction is an effect, which must have a cause, and needs to be explained; and if no cause can be found but the real occurrence of the event, then this occurrence is admitted as true. Such is the extent of testimony. Now a man, who affirms a miraculous phænomenon or event, may give us just as decisive proofs, by his character and conduct, of the strength and depth of his conviction, as if he were affirming a common occurrence. Testimony then does just as much in the case of miracles as of com-

mon events; that is, it discloses to us the conviction of another's mind. Now this conviction in the case of miracles, requires a cause, an explanation, as much as in every other; and if the circumstances be such, that it could not have sprung up and been established but by the reality of the alleged miracle, then that great and fundamental principle of human belief, namely, that every effect must have a cause, compels us to admit the miracle.

It may be observed of Hume and of other philosophical opposers of our religion, that they are much more inclined to argue against miracles *in general*, than against the particular miracles on which Christianity rests. And the reason is obvious. Miracles, when considered in a general, abstract manner, that is, when divested of all circumstances, and supposed to occur as disconnected facts, to stand alone in history, to have no explanations or reasons in preceding events, and no influence on those which follow, are indeed open to great objection, as wanton and useless violations of nature's order; and it is accordingly against miracles, considered in this naked, general form, that the arguments of infidelity are chiefly urged. But it is great disingenuity to class under this head the miracles of Christianity. They are palpably different. They do not stand alone in history; but are most intimately incorporated with it. They were demanded by the state of the world which preceded them, and they have left deep traces on all subsequent ages. In fact, the history of the

whole civilized world, since their alleged occurrence, has been swayed and coloured by them, and is wholly inexplicable without them. Now such miracles are not to be met and disposed of by general reasonings, which apply only to insulated, unimportant, uninfluential prodigies.

I have thus considered the objections to miracles in general, and I would close this head with observing, that these objections will lose their weight, just in proportion as we strengthen our conviction of God's power over nature and of his paternal interest in his creatures. The great repugnance to the belief of miraculous agency is founded in a lurking atheism, which ascribes supremacy to nature, and which, whilst it professes to believe in God, questions his tender concern for the improvement of men. To a man who cherishes a sense of God, the great difficulty is, not to account for miracles, but to account for their rare occurrence. One of the mysteries of the universe is this, that its Author retires so continually behind the veil of his works, that the great and good Father does not manifest himself more distinctly to his creatures. There is something like coldness and repulsiveness, in instructing us only by fixed, inflexible laws of nature. The intercourse of God with Adam and the Patriarchs, suits our best conceptions of the relation which he bears to the human race, and ought not to surprise us more than the expression of a human parent's tenderness and concern towards his offspring.

After the remarks now made to remove the objection to revelation in general, I proceed to consider the evidences of the Christian religion in particular; and these are so numerous, that should I attempt to compress them into the short space which now remains, I could give but a syllabus, a dry and uninteresting index. It will be more useful to state to you, with some distinctness, the *general principle* into which all Christian evidences may be resolved, and on which the whole religion rests, and then to illustrate it in a few striking particulars.

All the evidences of Christianity may be traced to this great principle,—that every effect must have an adequate cause. We claim for our religion a divine original, because no adequate cause for it can be found in the powers or passions of human nature, or in the circumstances under which it appeared; because it can only be accounted for by the interposition of that Being, to whom its first preachers universally ascribed it, and with whose nature it perfectly agrees.

Christianity, by which we mean not merely the doctrines of the religion, but every thing relating to it,—its rise, its progress, the character of its Author, the conduct of its propagators; Christianity, in this broad sense, can only be accounted for in two ways. It either sprung from the principles of human nature, under the excitements, motives, impulses of the age in which it was first preached; or it had its origin in higher and supernatural agency. To which

of these causes the religion should be referred, is not a question beyond our reach; for being partakers of human nature, and knowing more of it than any other part of the creation, we can judge with sufficient accuracy of the operation of its principles, and of the effects to which they are competent. It is indeed true, that human powers are not exactly defined, nor can we state precisely the bounds beyond which they cannot pass; but still the disproportion between human nature and an effect ascribed to it, may be so vast and palpable as to satisfy us at once that the effect is inexplicable by human power. I know not precisely what advances may be made by the intellect of an unassisted savage; but that a savage in the woods could not compose the Principia of Newton, is about as plain as that he could not create the world. I know not the point at which bodily strength must stop; but that a man cannot carry Atlas or Andes, on his shoulders, is a safe position. The question, therefore, whether the principles of human nature, under the circumstances in which it was placed at Christ's birth, will explain his religion, is one to which we are competent, and is the great question on which the whole controversy turns.

Now we maintain that a great variety of facts belonging to this religion,—such as the character of its Founder; its peculiar principles; the style and character of its records; its progress; the conduct, circumstances, and sufferings of its first propaga-

tors; the reception of it from the first on the ground of miraculous attestations; the prophecies which it fulfilled and which it contains; its influence on society, and other circumstances connected with it;—are utterly inexplicable by human powers and principles, but accord with, and are fully explained by, the power and perfection of God.

These various particulars I cannot attempt to unfold. One or two may be illustrated, to show you the mode of applying the principles which I have laid down. I will take first the *character of Jesus Christ.* How is this to be explained by the principles of human nature?—We are immediately struck with this peculiarity in the Author of Christianity, that whilst all other men are formed in a measure by the spirit of the age, we can discover in Jesus no impression of the period in which he lived. We know with considerable accuracy the state of society, the modes of thinking, the hopes and expectations of the country in which Jesus was born and grew up; and he is as free from them, and as exalted above them, as if he had lived in another world, or, with every sense shut on the objects around him. His character has in it nothing local or temporary. It can be explained by nothing around him. His history shows him to us a solitary being, living for purposes which none but himself comprehended, and enjoying not so much as the sympathy of a single mind. His apostles, his chosen companions, brought to him the spirit of the age; and nothing

shows its strength more strikingly than the slowness with which it yielded in these honest men to the instructions of Jesus.

Jesus came to a nation expecting a Messiah; and he claimed this character. But instead of conforming to the opinions which prevailed in regard to the Messiah, he resisted them wholly and without reserve. To a people anticipating a triumphant leader, under whom vengeance as well as ambition was to be glutted by the prostration of their oppressors, he came as a spiritual leader teaching humility and peace. This undisguised hostility to the dearest hopes and prejudices of his nation; this disdain of the usual compliances, by which ambition and imposture conciliate adherents; this deliberate exposure of himself to rejection and hatred, cannot easily be explained by the common principles of human nature, and excludes the possibility of selfish aims in the Author of Christianity.

One striking peculiarity in Jesus is the *extent*, the vastness of his views. Whilst all around him looked for a Messiah to liberate God's ancient people; whilst to every other Jew, Judea was the exclusive object of pride and hope;—Jesus came, declaring himself to be the deliverer and light of *the world*; and in his whole teaching and life, you see a consciousness, which never forsakes him, of a relation to the whole human race. This idea of blessing mankind, of spreading a universal religion, was the most magnificent which had ever entered

man's mind. All previous religions had been given to particular nations. No conqueror, legislator, philosopher, in the extravagance of ambition, had ever dreamed of subjecting all nations to a common faith.

This conception of a universal religion, intended alike for Jew and Gentile, for all nations and climes, is wholly inexplicable by the circumstances of Jesus. He was a Jew; and the first and deepest and most constant impression on a Jew's mind, was that of the superiority conferred on his people and himself by the national religion introduced by Moses. The wall between the Jew and the Gentile seemed to reach to heaven. The abolition of the peculiarity of Moses, the overthrow of the temple on Mount Sinai, the erection of a new religion, in which all men would meet as brethren, and which would be the common and equal property of Jew and Gentile,—these were of all ideas the last to spring up in Judea, the last for enthusiasm or imposture to originate.

Compare next these views of Christ with his station in life. He was of humble birth and education, with nothing in his lot, with no extensive means, no rank, or wealth, or patronage, to infuse vast thoughts and extravagant plans. The shop of a carpenter, the village of Nazareth, were not spots for ripening a scheme more aspiring and extensive than had ever been formed. It is a principle of human nature, that except in case of insanity, *some*

proportion is observed between the power of an individual and his plans and hopes. The purpose to which Jesus devoted himself was as ill suited to his condition as an attempt to change the seasons, or to make the sun rise in the west. That a young man, in obscure life, belonging to an oppressed nation, should seriously think of subverting the time-hallowed and deep-rooted religions of the world, is a strange fact: but with this purpose we see the mind of Jesus thoroughly imbued; and, sublime as it is, he never falls below it in his language or conduct; but speaks and acts with a consciousness of superiority, with a dignity and authority, becoming this unparalleled destination.

In this connection I cannot but add another striking circumstance in Jesus; and that is, the calm confidence with which he always looked forward to the accomplishment of his design. He fully knew the strength of the passions and powers which were arrayed against him, and was perfectly aware that his life was to be shortened by violence; yet not a word escapes him, implying a doubt of the ultimate triumphs of his religion. One of the beauties of the Gospels, and one of the proofs of their genuineness, is found in our Saviour's indirect and obscure allusions to his approaching sufferings, and to the glory which was to follow; allusions showing us the workings of a mind thoroughly conscious of being appointed to accomplish infinite good through great calamity. This

entire and patient relinquishment of immediate success, this ever-present persuasion that he was to perish before his religion would advance, and this calm unshaken anticipation of distant and unbounded triumphs, are remarkable traits, throwing a tender and solemn grandeur over our Lord, and wholly inexplicable by human principles, or by the circumstances in which he was placed.

The views hitherto taken of Christ, relate to his public character and office. If we pass to what may be called his private character, we shall receive the same impression of inexplicable excellence. The most striking trait in Jesus was, undoubtedly, benevolence; and although this virtue had existed before, yet it had not been manifested in the same form and extent. Christ's benevolence was distinguished first by its expansiveness. At that age, an unconfined philanthropy, proposing and toiling to do good, without distinction of country or rank, was unknown. Love to man as man,—love, comprehending the hated Samaritan and the despised publican,—was a feature which separated Jesus from the best men of his nation and of the world. Another characteristic of the benevolence of Jesus was its gentleness and tenderness, forming a strong contrast with the hardness and ferocity of the spirit and manners which then prevailed, and with that sternness and inflexibility which the purest philosophy of Greece and Rome inculcated as the perfection of virtue. But its most distinguishing trait

was its superiority to injury. Revenge was one of the recognized rights of the age in which he lived; and though a few sages, who had seen its inconsistency with man's dignity, had condemned it, yet none had inculcated the duty of regarding one's worst enemies with that kindness which God manifests to sinful men, and of returning curses with blessings and prayers. This form of benevolence, the most disinterested and divine form, was, as you well know, manifested by Jesus Christ in infinite strength, amidst injuries and indignities which cannot be surpassed. Now this singular eminence of goodness, this superiority to the degrading influences of the age, under which all other men suffered, needs to be explained; and one thing it demonstrates, that Jesus Christ was not an unprincipled deceiver, exposing not only his own life, but the lives of confiding friends, in an enterprise next to desperate.

I cannot enlarge on other traits of the character of Christ. I will only observe, that it had one distinction, which, more than any thing, forms a perfect character. It was made up of contrasts; in other words, it was a union of excellencies which are not easily reconciled, which seem at first sight incongruous, but which, when blended and duly proportioned, constitute moral harmony, and attract with equal power, love and veneration. For example, we discover in Jesus Christ an unparalleled dignity of character, a consciousness of greatness, never

discovered or approached by any other individual in history; and yet this was blended with a condescension, lowliness, and unostentatious simplicity, which had never before been thought consistent with greatness. In like manner he united an utter superiority to the world, to its pleasures and ordinary interests, with suavity of manners and freedom from austerity. He joined strong feeling and self-possession; an indignant sensibility to sin, and compassion to the sinner; an intense devotion to his work, and calmness under opposition and ill success; a universal philanthropy, and a susceptibility of private attachments; the authority which became the Saviour of the world, and the tenderness and gratitude of a son. Such was the Author of our religion. And is his character to be explained by imposture or insane enthusiasm? Does it not bear the unambiguous marks of a heavenly origin?

Perhaps it may be said, this character never existed. Then the invention of it is to be explained, and the reception which this fiction met with; and these perhaps are as difficult of explanation on natural principles, as its real existence. Christ's history bears all the marks of reality: a more frank, simple, unlaboured, unostentatious narrative was never penned. Besides, his character, if invented, must have been an invention of singular difficulty, because no models existed on which to frame it. He stands alone in the records of time. The conception of a being, proposing such new and exalted

ends, and governed by higher principles than the progress of society had developed, implies singular intellectual power. That several individuals should join in equally vivid conceptions of this character; and should not merely describe in general terms the fictitious being to whom it was attributed, but should introduce him into real life, should place him in a great variety of circumstances, in connection with various ranks of men, with friends and foes, and should in all preserve his identity, show the same great and singular mind always acting in harmony with itself; this is a supposition hardly credible, and, when the circumstances of the writers of the New Testament are considered, seems to be as inexplicable on human principles, as what I before suggested, the composition of Newton's Principia by a savage. The character of Christ, though delineated in an age of great moral darkness, has stood the scrutiny of ages; and in proportion as men's moral sentiments have been refined, its beauty has been more seen and felt. To suppose it invented, is to suppose that its authors, outstripping their age, had attained to a singular delicacy and elevation of moral perception and feeling. But these attainments are not very reconcileable with the character of its authors, supposing it to be a fiction; that is, with the character of habitual liars and impious deceivers.

But we are not only unable to discover power adequate to this invention. There must have been *motives* for it; for men do not make great efforts,

without strong motives; and in the whole compass of human incitements, we challenge the infidel to suggest any, which could have prompted to the work, now to be explained.

Once more, it must be recollected, that this invention, if it were one, was received as real, at a period so near to the time ascribed to Christ's appearance, that the means of detecting it were infinite. That men should send out such a forgery, and that it should prevail and triumph, are circumstances not easily reconcileable with the principles of our nature.

The character of Christ, then, was real. Its reality is the only explanation of the mighty revolution produced by his religion. And how can you account for it, but by that cause to which he always referred it,—a mission from the Father?

Next to the character of Christ, *his Religion* might be shown to abound in circumstances which contradict and repel the idea of a human origin. For example, its representations of the paternal character of God; its inculcation of a universal charity; the stress which it lays on inward purity; its substitution of a spiritual worship for the forms and ceremonies which every where had usurped the name and extinguished the life of religion; its preference of humility, and of the mild, unostentatious passive virtues, to the dazzling qualities which hail monopolized men's admiration; its consistent and

bright discoveries of immortality; its adaptation to the wants of man as a sinner; its adaptation to all the conditions, capacities, and sufferings of human nature; its pure, sublime, yet practicable morality; its high and generous motives; and its fitness to form a character which plainly prepares for a higher life than the present;—these are peculiarities of Christianity, which will strike us more and more, in proportion as we understand distinctly the circumstances of the age and country in which this religion appeared, and for which no adequate human cause has been or can be assigned.

Passing over these topics, each of which might be enlarged into a discourse, I will make but one remark on this religion, which strikes my own mind very forcibly. Since its introduction, human nature has made great progress, and society experienced great changes; and in this advanced condition of the world, Christianity, instead of losing its application and importance, is found to be more and more congenial and adapted to man's nature and wants. Men have outgrown the other institutions of that period when Christianity appeared,—its philosophy, its modes of warfare, its policy, its public and private œconomy; but Christianity has never shrunk as intellect has opened, but has always kept in advance of men's faculties, and unfolded nobler views in proportion as they have ascended. The highest powers and affections, which our nature has developed, find more than adequate objects in this

religion. Christianity is indeed peculiarly fitted to the more improved stages of society, to the more delicate sensibilities of refined minds, and especially to that dissatisfaction with the present state, which always grows with the growth of our moral powers and affections. As men advance in civilization, they become susceptible of mental sufferings, to which ruder ages are strangers; and these Christianity is fitted to assuage. Imagination and intellect become more restless; and Christianity brings them tranquillity by the eternal and magnificent truths, the solemn and unbounded prospects which it unfolds. This fitness of our religion to more advanced stages of society than that in which it was introduced, to wants of human nature not then developed, seems to me very striking. The religion bears the marks of having come from a being who perfectly understood the human mind, and had power to provide for its progress. This feature of Christianity is of the nature of prophecy. It was an anticipation of future and distant ages; and when we consider among whom our religion sprung, where, but in God, can we find an explanation of this peculiarity?

I have now offered a few hints on the character of Christ, and on the character of his religion; and before quitting these topics, I would observe, that they form a strong presumption in favour of the miraculous facts of the Christian history. These miracles were not wrought by a man, whose character in other respects was ordinary. They were acts

of a being, whose mind was as singular as his works, who spoke and acted with more than human authority, whose moral qualities and sublime purposes were in accordance with superhuman powers. Christ's miracles are in unison with his whole character, and bear a proportion to it, like that which we observe in the most harmonious productions of nature; and in this way they receive from it great confirmation. And the same presumption in their favour arises from his religion. That a religion, carrying in itself such marks of divinity, and so inexplicable on human principles, should receive outward confirmations from Omnipotence, is not surprising. The extraordinary character of the religion accords with, and seems to demand, extraordinary interpositions in its behalf. Its miracles are not solitary, naked, unexplored, disconnected events; but are bound up with a system, which is worthy of God, and impressed with God; which occupies a large space, and is operating with great and increasing energy in human affairs.

As yet I have not touched on what seem to many writers the strongest proofs of Christianity, I mean the *direct evidences of its miracles*, by which we mean the testimony borne to them, including the character, conduct, and condition of the witnesses. These I have not time to unfold; nor is this labour needed; for Paley's inestimable work, which is one of your classical books, has stated these proofs with

great clearness and power. I would only observe, that they may all be resolved into this single principle; namely, that the Christian miracles were originally believed under such circumstances, that this belief can only be explained by their actual occurrence. That Christianity was received at first on the ground of miracles, and that its first preachers and converts proved the depth and strength of their conviction of these facts, by attesting them in sufferings and in death, we know from the most ancient records which relate to this religion, both Christian and Heathen; and, in fact, this conviction can alone explain their adherence to Christianity. Now that this conviction could only have sprung from the reality of the miracles, we infer from the known circumstances of these witnesses, whose passions, interests, and strongest prejudices were originally hostile to the new religion; whose motives for examining with care the facts on which it rested were as urgent and solemn, and whose means and opportunities of ascertaining their truth were as ample and unfailing, as can be conceived to conspire; so that the supposition of their falsehood cannot be admitted, without subverting our trust in human judgement and human testimony under the most favourable circumstances for discovering truth; that is, without introducing universal scepticism.

There is one class of Christian evidences to which

I have but slightly referred, but which has struck with peculiar force men of reflecting minds. I refer to the marks of truth and reality which are found in the *Christian records*; to the internal proofs which the books of the New Testament carry with them, of having been written by men, who lived in the first age of Christianity, who believed and felt its truth, who bore a part in the labours and conflicts which attended its establishment, and who wrote from personal knowledge and deep conviction. A few remarks to illustrate the nature and power of these internal proofs, which are furnished by the books of the New Testament, I will now subjoin.

The New Testament consists of histories and epistles. The historical books, namely, the Gospels and the Acts, are a continued narrative, embracing many years, and professing to give the history of the rise and progress of the religion. Now it is worthy of observation, that these writings completely answer their end; that they completely solve the problem, how this peculiar religion grew up and established itself in the world; that they furnish precise and adequate causes for this stupendous revolution in human affairs. It is also worthy of remark, that they relate a series of facts, which are not only connected with one another, but are intimately linked with the long series which has followed them, and agree accurately with subsequent history, so as to account for and sustain it. Now that a collection of *fictitious* narratives, coming from different hands,

comprehending many years, and spreading over many countries, should not only form a consistent whole, when taken by themselves; but should also connect and interweave themselves with real history so naturally and intimately as to furnish no clue for detection, as to exclude the appearance of incongruity and discordance, and as to give an adequate explanation, and the only explanation of acknowledged events, of the most important revolution in society; this is a supposition, from which an intelligent man at once revolts, and which, if admitted, would shake a principal foundation of history.

I have before spoken of the unity and consistency of Christ's character, as developed in the Gospels, and of the agreement of the different writers in giving us the singular features of his mind. Now there are the same marks of truth running through the whole of these narratives. For example, the effects produced by Jesus on the various classes of society; the different feelings of admiration, attachment, and envy, which he called forth; the various expressions of these feelings; the prejudices, mistakes, and gradual illumination of his disciples; these are all given to us with such marks of truth and reality as could not easily be counterfeited. The whole history is precisely such as might be expected from the actual appearance of such a person as Jesus Christ, in such a state of society as then existed.

The Epistles, if possible, abound in marks of truth and reality even more than the Gospels. They are imbued thoroughly with the spirit of the first age of Christianity. They bear all the marks of having come from men, plunged in the conflicts which the new religion excited, alive to its interests, identified with its fortunes. They betray the very state of mind, which must have been generated by the peculiar condition of the first propagators of the religion. They are letters written on real business, intended for immediate effects, designed to meet prejudices and passions, which such a religion must at first have awakened. They contain not a trace of the circumstances of a later age, or of the feelings, impressions, and modes of thinking by which later times were characterized, and from which later writers could not easily have escaped. The letters of Paul have a remarkable agreement with his history. They are precisely such as might be expected from a man of a vehement mind, who had been brought up in the schools of Jewish literature, who had been converted by a sudden overwhelming miracle, who had been entrusted with the preaching of the new religion to the Gentiles, who had been every where met by the prejudices and persecuting spirit of his own nation. They are full of obscurities growing out of these points of Paul's history and character, and out of the circumstances of the infant church, and which nothing but an intimate acquaintance with that early period can

illustrate. This remarkable infusion of the spirit of the first age into the Christian records, cannot easily be explained but by the fact, that they were written in that age by the real and zealous propagators of Christianity, and that they are records of real convictions and of actual events.

There is another evidence of Christianity, still more internal than any on which I have yet dwelt, an evidence to be *felt* rather than described, but not less real because founded on feeling. I refer to that conviction of the divine original of our religion, which springs up and continually gains strength in those who apply it habitually in their tempers and lives, and who imbibe its spirit and hopes. In such men, there is a consciousness of the adaptation of Christianity to their noblest faculties; a consciousness of its exalting and consoling influences, of its power to confer the true happiness of human nature, to give that peace which the world cannot give; which assures them that it is not of earthly origin, but a ray from the Everlasting Light, a stream from the Fountain of Heavenly Wisdom and Love. This is the evidence which sustains the faith of thousands, who never read and cannot understand the learned books of Christian apologists; who want, perhaps, words to explain the ground of their belief, but whose faith is of adamantine firmness; who hold the Gospel with a conviction more intimate and unwavering than *mere* argument ever produced.

But I must tear myself from a subject which opens upon me continually as I proceed. Imperfect as this discussion is, the conclusion, I trust, is placed beyond doubt, that Christianity is true. And, my hearers, if true, it is the greatest of all truths, deserving and demanding our reverent attention and fervent gratitude. This religion must never be confounded with our common blessings. It is a revelation of pardon, which, as sinners, we all need. Still more it is a revelation of human Immortality; a doctrine, which, however undervalued amidst the bright anticipations of inexperienced youth, is found to be our strength and consolation, and the only effectual spring of persevering and victorious virtue, when the realities of life have scattered our visionary hopes; when pain, dissappointment, and temptation press upon us; when this world's enjoyments are found unable to quench that deep thirst of happiness which burns in every breast; when friends, whom we love as our own souls, die, and our own graves open before us.—To all who hear me, and especially to my young hearers, I would say, Let the truth of this religion be the strongest conviction of your understandings; let its motives and precepts sway with an absolute power your character and lives.

SERMON II.

ON THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. JARED SPARKS,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE OF THE FIRST INDEPENDENT CHURCH IN BALTIMORE,

MAY 5th, 1819.

"*Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*"—1 THESS. v. 21.

THE peculiar circumstances of this occasion not only justify, but seem to demand, a departure from the course generally followed by preachers at the introduction of a brother into the sacred office. It is usual to speak of the nature, design, duties and advantages of the Christian ministry; and on these topics I should now be happy to insist, did I not remember that a minister is to be given this day to a religious society, whose peculiarities of opinion have drawn upon them much remark, and may I not add much reproach. Many good minds, many sincere Christians, I am aware, are apprehensive that the solemnities of this day are to give a great degree of influence to principles which they deem false and injurious. The fears and anxieties of such men I respect; and believing that they are grounded

in part on mistake, I have thought it my duty to lay before you, as clearly as I can, some of the distinguishing opinions of that class of Christians in our country, who are known to sympathize with this religious society. I must ask your patience, for such a subject is not to be despatched in a narrow compass. I must also ask you to remember, that it is impossible to exhibit, in a single discourse, our views of every doctrine of revelation, much less the differences of opinion which are known to subsist among ourselves. I shall confine myself to topics on which our sentiments have been misrepresented, or which distinguish us most widely from others. May I not hope to be heard with candour? God deliver us from all prejudice and unkindness, and fill us with the love of truth and virtue.

There are two natural divisions under which my thoughts will be arranged.—I shall endeavour to unfold, first, the principles which we adopt in interpreting the Scriptures. And secondly, some of the doctrines which the Scriptures, so interpreted, seem to us clearly to express.

I. We regard the Scriptures as the records of God's successive revelations to mankind, and particularly of the last and most perfect revelation of his will by Jesus Christ. Whatever doctrines seem to us to be clearly taught in the Scriptures, we receive without reserve or exception. We do not, however, attach equal importance to all the books in this collection. Our religion, we believe, lies chiefly in the

New Testament. The dispensation of Moses, compared with that of Jesus, we consider as imperfect, earthly, obscure, adapted to the childhood of the human race, a preparation for a nobler system, and chiefly useful now as serving to confirm and illustrate the Christian Scriptures. Jesus Christ is the only master of Christians; and whatever he taught, either during his personal ministry, or by his inspired apostles, we regard as of divine authority, and profess to make the rule of our lives.

This authority, which we give to the Scriptures, is a reason, we conceive, for studying them with peculiar care, and for inquiring anxiously into the principles of interpretation, by which their true meaning may be ascertained. The principles adopted by the class of Christians, in whose name I speak, need to be explained, because they are often misunderstood. We are particularly accused of making an unwarrantable use of reason in the interpretation of Scripture. We are said to exalt reason above revelation, to prefer our own wisdom to God's. Loose and undefined charges of this kind, are circulated so freely, and with such injurious intentions, that we think it due to ourselves, and to the cause of truth, to express our views with some particularity.

Our leading principle in interpreting the Scriptures is this,—that the Bible is a book written for men, in the language of men, and that its meaning is to be sought in the same manner as that of other

books. We believe that God, when he condescends to speak and write, submits, if we may so say, to the established rules of speaking and writing. How else would the Scriptures avail us more than if communicated in an unknown tongue.

Now all books and all conversation require in the reader or hearer the constant exercise of reason; or their true import is only to be obtained by continual comparison and inference. Human language, you well know, admits various interpretations, and every word and every sentence must be modified and explained according to the subject which is discussed, according to the purposes, feelings, circumstances and principles of the writer, and according to the genius and idiom of the language which he uses. These are acknowledged principles in the interpretation of human writings: and a man, whose words we should explain without reference to these principles, would reproach us justly with a criminal want of candour, and an intention of obscuring or distorting his meaning.

Were the Bible written in a language and style of its own; did it consist of words, which admit but a single sense, and of sentences wholly detached from each other, there would be no place for the principles now laid down. We could not reason about it, as about other writings. But such a book would be of little worth; and perhaps, of all books, the Scriptures correspond least to this description. The word of God bears the stamp of the same hand,

which we see in his works. It has infinite connections and dependencies. Every proposition is linked with others, and is to be compared with others, that its full and precise import may be understood. Nothing stands alone. The New Testament is built on the Old. The Christian dispensation is a continuation of the Jewish, the completion of a vast scheme of Providence, requiring great extent of view in the reader. Still more, the Bible treats of subjects on which we receive ideas from other sources besides itself; such subjects as the nature, passions, relations, and duties of man; and it expects us to restrain and modify its language, by the known truth which observation and experience furnish on these topics.

We profess not to know a book which demands a more frequent exercise of reason than the Bible. In addition to the remarks now made on its infinite connections, we may observe, that its style no where affects the precision of science, or the accuracy of definition. Its language is singularly glowing, bold, and figurative, demanding more frequent departures from the literal sense, than that of our own age and country, and consequently demanding more continual exercise of judgement.—We find too, that the different portions of this book, instead of being confined to general truths, refer perpetually to times when they were written, to states of society, to modes of thinking, to controversies in the church, to feelings and usages which have passed away, and without the

knowledge of which we are constantly in danger of extending to all times and places, what was of temporary and local application. We find too, that some of these books are strongly marked by the genius and character of their respective writers; that the Holy Spirit did not so guide the apostles as to suspend the peculiarities of their minds; and that a knowledge of their feelings, and of the influences under which they were placed, is one of the preparations for understanding their writings. With these views of the Bible, we feel it our bounden duty to exercise our reason upon it perpetually; to compare, to infer, to look beyond the letter to the spirit, to seek in the nature of the subject, and the aim of the writer, his true meaning; and, in general, to make use of what is known, for explaining what is difficult, and for discovering new truths.

Need I descend to particulars to prove that the Scriptures demand the exercise of reason. Take, for example, the style in which they generally speak of God, and observe how habitually they apply to him human passions and organs. Recollect the declarations of Christ, that he came not to send peace, but a sword; that unless we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, we have no life in us; that we must hate father and mother, pluck out the right eye;—and a vast number of passages equally bold and unlimited. Recollect the unqualified manner in which it is said of Christians, that they possess all things, know all things, and can do all things. Recollect

the verbal contradiction between Paul and James, and the apparent clashing of some parts of Paul's writings, with the general doctrines and end of Christianity. I might extend the enumeration indefinitely: And who does not see, that we must limit all these passages by the known attributes of God, of Jesus Christ, and of human nature, and by the circumstances under which they were written, so as to give the language a quite different import from what it would require, had it been applied to different beings, or used in different connections?

Enough has been said to show in what sense we make use of reason in interpreting Scripture. From a variety of possible interpretations, we select that which accords with the nature of the subject and state of the writer, with the connection of the passage, with the general strain of Scripture, with the known character and will of God, and with the obvious and acknowledged laws of nature. In other words, we believe that God never contradicts, in one part of Scripture, what he teaches in another; and never contradicts in revelation, what he teaches in his works and providence. And we therefore distrust every interpretation, which, after deliberate attention, seems repugnant to any established truth. We reason about the Bible precisely as civilians do about the constitution under which we live, who, you know, are accustomed to limit one provision of that venerable instrument by others, and to affix the precise import of its parts by inquiring into its

general spirit, into the intentions of its authors, and into the prevalent feelings, impressions, and circumstances of the time when it was framed. Without these principles of interpretation, we frankly acknowledge, that we cannot defend the divine authority of the Scriptures. Deny us this latitude, and we must abandon this book to its enemies.

We do not announce these principles as original or peculiar to ourselves. All Christians occasionally adopt them; not excepting those, who most vehemently decry them when they happen to menace some favourite article of their creed. All Christians are compelled to use them in their controversies with infidels. All sects employ them in their warfare with one another. All willingly avail themselves of reason, when it can be pressed into the service of their own party; and only complain of it, when its weapons wound themselves. None reason more frequently than our opponents. It is astonishing what a fabric they rear, from a few slight hints about the fall of our first parents; and how ingeniously they extract from detached passages, mysterious doctrines about the divine nature. We do not blame them for reasoning so abundantly, but for violating the fundamental rules of reasoning, for sacrificing the plain to the obscure, and the general strain of Scripture, to a scanty number of insulated texts.

We object strongly to the contemptuous manner in which human reason is often spoken of by our opponents, because it leads, we believe, to universal

scepticism. If reason be so dreadfully darkened by the fall, that its most decisive judgements on religion are unworthy of trust, then Christianity, and even natural theology, must be abandoned; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the sceptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over every truth. We honour revelation too highly to make it the antagonist of reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers.

We indeed grant, that the use of reason in religion is accompanied with danger. But we ask any honest man to look back on the history of the church, and say, whether the renunciation of it be not still more dangerous. Besides, it is a plain fact that men reason as erroneously on all subjects, as on religion. Who does not know the wild and groundless theories which have been framed in physical and political science? But who ever supposed, that we must cease to exercise reason on nature and society, because men have erred for ages in explaining them? We grant, that the passions continually, and sometimes fatally, disturb the rational faculty in its inquiries into revelation. The ambitious contrive

to find doctrines in the Bible, which favour their love of dominion. The timid and dejected discover there a gloomy system, and the mystical and fanatical, a visionary theology. The vicious can find examples or assertions on which to build the hope of a late repentance, or of acceptance on easy terms; whilst the falsely refined contrive to light on doctrines which have not been soiled by vulgar handling. But the passions do not distract the reason in religious, any more than in other inquiries, which excite strong and general interest; and this faculty, of consequence, is not to be renounced in religion, unless we are prepared to discard it universally. The true inference from the almost endless errors, which have darkened theology, is, not that we are to neglect and disparage our powers, but to exert them more patiently, circumspectly, uprightly. The worst errors, after all, have sprung up in that church which proscribes reason, and demands from its members implicit faith. The most pernicious doctrines have been the growth of darkest times; then the general credulity encouraged bad men and enthusiasts to broach their dreams and inventions, and to stifle the faint remonstrances of reason by the menaces of everlasting perdition. Say what we may, God has given us a rational nature, and will call us to account for it. We may let it sleep, but we do so at our peril. Revelation is addressed to us as rational beings. We may wish, in our sloth, that God had given us a system demanding no labour of com-

paring, limiting, and inferring. But such a system would be at variance with the whole character of our present existence; and it is the part of wisdom, to take revelation, as it is given to us, and to interpret it by the help of the faculties, which it every where supposes, and on which it is founded.

To the views now given, an objection is commonly urged from the character of God. We are told, that God being infinitely wiser than men, his discoveries will surpass human reason. In a revelation from such a teacher, we ought to expect propositions, that we cannot reconcile with one another, and which may seem to contradict established truths; and it becomes us not to question or explain them away, but to believe, and adore, and submit our weak and carnal reason to the divine word. To this objection, we have two short answers. We say, first, that it is impossible that a teacher of infinite wisdom should expose those, whom he would teach, to infinite error. But if once we admit, that propositions, which in their literal sense appear plainly repugnant to one another, or to any known truth, are still to be literally understood and received, what possible limit can we set to the belief of contradictions? What shelter have we from the wildest fanaticism, which can always quote passages, that in their literal and obvious sense give support to its extravagancies? How can the Protestant escape from transubstantiation, a doctrine most clearly taught us, if the submission of reason, now contended for,

be a duty? How can we even hold fast the truth of revelation; for if one apparent contradiction may be true, so may another; and the proposition, that Christianity is false, though involving inconsistency, may still be a verity?

We answer again, that, if God be infinitely wise, he cannot sport with the understandings of his creatures. A wise teacher discovers his wisdom in adapting himself to the capacities of his pupils, not in perplexing them with what is unintelligible, not in distressing them with apparent contradictions, not in filling them with a sceptical distrust of their powers. An infinitely wise teacher, who knows the precise extent of our minds, and best method of enlightening them, will surpass all other instructors in bringing down truth to our apprehension, and in showing its loveliness and harmony. We ought, indeed, to expect occasional obscurity in such a book as the Bible, which was written for past and future ages, as well as for the present. But God's wisdom is a pledge that whatever is necessary for *us*, and necessary for salvation, is revealed too plainly to be mistaken, and too consistently to be questioned, by a sound and upright mind. It is not the mark of wisdom, to use an unintelligible phraseology, to communicate what is above our capacities, to confuse and unsettle the intellect by appearances of contradiction. We honour our heavenly teacher too much to ascribe to him such a revelation. A revelation is

a gift of light. It cannot thicken our darkness, and multiply our perplexities.

II. Having thus stated the principles according to which we interpret Scripture, I now proceed to the second great head of this discourse, which is, to state some of the views, which we derive from that sacred book, particularly those which distinguish us from other Christians.

First. We believe in the doctrine of GOD'S UNITY, or that there is one God, and one only. To truth we give infinite importance, and we feel ourselves bound to take heed, lest any man spoil us of it by vain philosophy. The proposition, *that there is one God*, seems to us exceedingly plain. We understand by it, that there is one being, one mind, one person, one intelligent agent, and one only, to whom underived and infinite perfection and dominion belong. We conceive, that these words could have conveyed no other meaning to the simple and uncultivated people, who were set apart to be the depositaries of this great truth, and who were utterly incapable of understanding those hair-breadth distinctions between *being* and *person*, which the sagacity of latter years has discovered. We find no intimation that this language was to be taken in an unusual sense, or that God's unity was a quite different thing from the oneness of other intelligent beings.

We object to the doctrine of the Trinity, that it subverts the unity of God. According to this doc-

trine, there are three infinite and equal persons, possessing supreme divinity, called the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these persons, as described by theologians, has his own particular consciousness, will, and perceptions. They love each other, converse with each other, and delight in each other's society. They perform different parts in man's redemption, each having his appropriate office, and neither doing the work of the other. The Son is mediator, and not the Father. The Father sends the Son, and is not himself sent; nor is he conscious, like the Son, of taking flesh. Here then, we have three intelligent agents, possessed of different consciousnesses, different wills, and different perceptions, performing different acts, and sustaining different relations; and if these things do not imply and constitute three minds or beings, we are utterly at a loss to know how three minds or beings are to be formed. It is difference of properties, and acts, and consciousness, which leads us to the belief of different intelligent beings, and if this mark fail us, our whole knowledge falls; we have no proof, that all the agents and persons in the universe are not one and the same mind. When we attempt to conceive of three Gods, we can do nothing more, than represent to ourselves three agents, distinguished from each other by similar marks and peculiarities to those, which separate the persons of the Trinity; and when common Christians hear these persons spoken of as conversing with each

other, loving each other, and performing different acts, how can they help regarding them as different beings, different minds?

We do then, with all earnestness, though without reproaching our brethren, protest against the irrational and unscriptural doctrine of the Trinity. "To us," as to the Apostle and primitive Christians, "there is one God, even the Father." With Jesus, we worship the Father, as the only living and true God*. We are astonished, that any man can read the New Testament, and avoid the conviction, that the Father alone is God. We hear our Saviour continually appropriating this character to the Father. We find the Father continually distinguished from Jesus by this title, "God sent his Son," "God anointed Jesus." Now, how singular and inexplicable is this phraseology, which *fills* the New Testament, if this title belongs equally to Jesus, and if a principal object of this book is to reveal him as God, as partaking equally with the Father in supreme Divinity! We challenge our opponents to adduce one passage in the New Testament, where the word God means three persons, where it is not limited to one person, and where, unless turned from its usual sense by the connection, it does not mean the Father. Can stronger proof be given, that the doctrine of three persons in the Godhead, is not a fundamental doctrine of Christianity?

This doctrine, were it true, must, from its diffi-

* John xvii.

culty, singularity, and importance, have been laid down with great clearness, guarded with great care, and stated with all possible precision. But where does this statement appear? From the many passages, which treat of God, we ask for one, one only, in which we are told, that he is a threefold being, or, that he is three persons, or, that he is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. On the contrary, in the New Testament, where, at least, we might expect many express assertions of this nature, God is declared to be one, without the least attempt to prevent the acceptation of the words in their common sense; and he is always spoken of and addressed in the singular number, that is, in language which is universally understood to intend a single person, and to which no other idea would have been attached, without an express admonition. So entirely do the Scriptures abstain from stating the Trinity, that when our opponents would insert it into their creeds and doxologies, they are compelled to leave the Bible, and to invent forms of words altogether unsanctioned by Scriptural phraseology. That a doctrine so strange, so liable to misapprehension, so fundamental as this is said to be, and requiring such careful exposition, should be left so undefined and unprotected, to be made out by inference, and to be hunted through distant and detached parts of Scripture; this is a difficulty, which, we think, no ingenuity can explain.

We have another difficulty. Christianity, it must

be remembered, was planted and grew up amidst sharp-sighted enemies, who overlooked no objectionable part of the system, and who must have fastened with great earnestness on a doctrine involving such apparent contradictions as the Trinity. We cannot conceive an opinion against which the Jews, who prided themselves on an adherence to God's unity, would have raised an equal clamour. Now, how happens it, that in the Apostolic writings, which relate so much to objections against Christianity, and to the controversies which grew out of this religion, not *one word* is said, implying that objections were brought against the Gospel from the doctrine of the Trinity, not one word is uttered in its defence and explanation, not a word to rescue it from reproach and mistake? This argument has almost the force of demonstration. We are persuaded, that had three divine persons been announced by the first preachers of Christianity, all equal, and all infinite, one of whom was the very Jesus, who had lately died on a cross,—this peculiarity of Christianity would have almost absorbed every other, and the great labour of the Apostles would have been to repel the continual assaults, which it would have awakened. But the fact is, that not a whisper of objection to Christianity, on that account, reaches our ears, from the Apostolic age. In the Epistles we see not a trace of controversy called forth by the Trinity.

We have further objections to this doctrine, drawn

from its practical influence. We regard it as unfavourable to devotion, by dividing and distracting the mind in its communion with God. It is a great excellence of the doctrine of God's unity, that it offers to us ONE OBJECT of supreme homage, adoration and love, one infinite Father, one Being of beings, one original and fountain, to whom we may refer all good, on whom all our powers and affections may be concentrated, and whose lovely and venerable nature may pervade all our thoughts. True piety, when directed to an undivided Deity, has a chasteness, a singleness, most favourable to religious awe and love. Now the Trinity sets before us three distinct objects of supreme adoration; three infinite persons, having equal claims on our hearts; three divine agents, performing different offices, and to be acknowledged and worshipped in different relations. And is it possible, we ask, that the weak and limited mind of man can attach itself to these with the same power and joy, as to *one infinite Father*, the only First Cause, in whom all the blessings of nature and redemption meet, as their centre and source? Must not devotion be distracted by the equal rival claims of three equal persons, and must not the conscientious, consistent Christian be disturbed by an apprehension, lest he withhold from one or another of these, his due proportion of homage?

We also think, that the doctrine of the Trinity injures devotion, not only by joining to the Father

other objects of worship, but by taking from the Father the supreme affection, which is his due, and transferring it to the Son. This is a most important view. That Jesus Christ, if exalted into the infinite Divinity, should be more interesting than the Father, is precisely what might be expected from history, and from the principles of human nature. Men want an object of worship like themselves, and the great secret of idolatry lies in this propensity. A God clothed in our form, and feeling our wants and sorrows, speaks to our weak nature more strongly, than a Father in heaven, a pure spirit, invisible, and unapproachable, save by the reflecting and purified mind. We think too, that the peculiar offices ascribed to Jesus by the popular theology, make him the most attractive person in the Godhead. The Father is the depositary of the justice, the vindicator of the rights, the avenger of the laws of the Divinity. On the other hand, the Son, the brightness of the divine mercy, stands between the incensed Deity and guilty humanity, exposes his meek head to the storms, and his compassionate breast to the sword, of the divine justice, bears our whole load of punishment, and purchases with his blood every blessing which descends from heaven. Need we state the effect of these representations, especially on common minds, for whom Christianity was chiefly designed, and whom it seeks to bring to the Father, as the loveliest being? We do believe that the worship of a bleeding, suffering

God, tends strongly to absorb the mind, and to draw it from other objects, just as the human tenderness of the Virgin Mary has given her so conspicuous a place in the devotions of the Church of Rome. We believe too, that this worship, though attractive, is not most fitted to spiritualize the mind, that it awakens human transport, rather than that deep veneration of the moral perfections of God which is the essence of piety.

Secondly. Having thus given our views of the unity of God, I proceed to observe, that we believe in the *unity of Jesus Christ.* We believe that Jesus is one mind, one soul, one being, as truly one as we are, and equally distinct from the one God. We complain of the doctrine of the Trinity, that not satisfied with making God three beings, it makes Jesus Christ two beings, and thus introduces infinite confusion into our conceptions of his character. This corruption of Christianity alike repugnant to common sense, and to the general strain of Scripture, is a remarkable proof of the power of a false philosophy in disfiguring the simple truth.

According to this doctrine, Jesus Christ instead of being one mind, one conscious intelligent principle, whom we can understand, consists of two souls, two minds; the one divine, the other human; the one weak, the other almighty; the one ignorant, the other omniscient. Now we maintain, that this is to make Christ two beings. To denominate him one person, one being, and yet to suppose him

made up of two minds, infinitely different from each other, is to abuse and confound language, and to throw darkness over all our conceptions of intelligent natures. According to the common doctrine, each of these two minds in Christ has its own consciousness, its own will, its own perceptions. They have in fact no common properties. The divine mind feels none of the wants and sorrows of the human, and the human is infinitely removed from the perfection and happiness of the divine. Can you conceive of two beings in the universe more distinct? We have always thought that one person was constituted and distinguished by one consciousness. The doctrine, that one and the same person should have two consciousnesses, two wills, two souls, infinitely different from each other, this we think an enormous tax on human credulity.

We say, that if a doctrine, so strange, so difficult, so remote from all the previous conceptions of men, be indeed a part, and an essential part of revelation, it must be taught with great distinctness, and we ask our brethren to point to some plain, direct passage, where Christ is said to be composed of two minds infinitely different, yet constituting one person. We find none. Our opponents, indeed, tell us, that this doctrine is necessary to the harmony of the Scriptures, that some texts ascribe to Jesus Christ human, and others divine properties, and that to reconcile these, we must suppose two minds, to which these properties may be referred. In other

words, for the purpose of reconciling certain difficult passages, which a just criticism can in a great degree, if not wholly, explain, we must invent an hypothesis vastly more difficult, and involving gross absurdity. We are to find our way out of a labyrinth, by a clue, which conducts us into mazes infinitely more inextricable.

Surely if Jesus Christ felt that he consisted of two minds, and that this was a leading feature of his religion, his phraseology respecting himself would have been coloured by this peculiarity. The universal language of men is framed upon the idea, that one person is one mind, and one soul; and when the multitude heard this language from the lips of Jesus, they must have taken it in its usual sense, and must have referred to a single soul all which he spoke, unless expressly instructed to interpret it differently. But where do we find this instruction? Where do you meet, in the New Testament, the phraseology which abounds in Trinitarian books, and necessarily grew from the doctrine of two natures of Jesus? Where does this divine teacher say, "This I speak as God, and this as man; this is true only of my human mind, this only of my divine?" Where do we find in the Epistles a trace of this strange phraseology? No where. It was not needed in that day. It was demanded by the errors of a later age. . . . . .

We believe then, that Christ is one mind, one being, and I add, a being distinct from the one

God. That Christ is not the one God, not the same being with the Father, is a necessary inference from our former head, in which we saw that the doctrine of three persons in God is a fiction. But on so important a subject, I would add a few remarks. We wish, that our opponents would weigh one striking fact. Jesus, in his preaching, continually spoke of God. The word was always in his mouth. We ask, does he, by this word, ever mean himself? We say, *never*. On the contrary, he most plainly distinguishes between God and himself, and so do his Disciples. How this is to be reconciled with the idea, that the manifestation of Christ, as God, was a primary object of Christianity, our opponents must determine.

If we examine the passages in which Jesus is distinguished from God, we shall see, that they not only speak of him as another being, but seem to labour to express his inferiority. He is continually spoken of as the Son of God, sent of God, receiving all his powers from God, working miracles because God was with him, judging justly because God taught him, having claims on our belief, because he was anointed and sealed by God, and as able of himself to do nothing. The New Testament is *filled* with this language. Now we ask, what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Could any, who heard it, have imagined, that Jesus was the *very God*, to whom he was so industriously declared to be inferior; the *very being*,

by whom he was sent, and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered, that the human birth, and bodily form and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most unqualified manner, the language in which his inferiority to God was declared. Why then was this language used so continually, and without limitation, if Jesus were the supreme Deity, and if this truth were an essential part of his religion? I repeat it, the human condition and sufferings of Christ, tended strongly to exclude from men's minds the idea of his proper Godhead; and of course, we should expect to find in the New Testament perpetual care and effort to counteract this tendency to hold him forth as the same being with his Father, if this doctrine were, as is pretended, the soul and centre of his religion. We should expect to find the phraseology of Scripture cast into the mould of this doctrine, to hear familiarly of God the Son, of our Lord God Jesus, and to be told, that to us there is one God, even Jesus. But instead of this, the inferiority of Christ pervades the New Testament. It is not only implied in the general phraseology, but repeatedly and decidedly expressed, and unaccompanied with any admonition to prevent its application to his whole nature. Could it then have been the great design of the sacred writers, to exhibit Jesus as the Supreme God?

I am aware that these remarks will be met by

two or three texts, in which Christ is called God, and by a class of passages, not very numerous, in which divine properties are said to be ascribed to him. To these we offer one plain answer. We say, that it is one of the most established and obvious principles of criticism, that language is to be explained according to the known properties of the subject to which it is applied. Every man knows, that the same words convey very different ideas, when used in relation to different beings. Thus Solomon *built* the temple in a different manner from the architect, whom he employed; and God *repents* differently from man. Now, we maintain, that the known properties and circumstances of Christ, his birth, sufferings, and death, his constant habit of speaking of God as a distinct being from himself, his praying to God, his ascribing to God all his power and offices; these acknowledged properties of Christ, we say, oblige us to interpret the comparatively few passages, which are thought to make him the supreme God, in a manner consistent with his distinct and inferior nature. It is our duty to explain such texts, by the rule which we apply to other texts, in which human beings are called Gods, and are said to be partakers of the divine nature, to know and possess all things, and to be filled with all God's fulness. These latter passages we do not hesitate to modify, and restrain, and turn from the obvious sense, because this sense is opposed to the known properties of the beings

to whom they relate; and we maintain, that we adhere to the same principle, and use no greater latitude, in explaining, as we do, the passages which are thought to support the Godhead of Christ.

Trinitarians profess to derive some important advantages from their mode of viewing Christ. It furnishes them, they tell us, with an infinite atonement, for it shows them an infinite being, suffering for their sins. The confidence with which this fallacy is repeated astonishes us. When pressed with the question, whether they really believe, that the infinite and unchangeable God suffered and died on the cross, they acknowledge that this is not true, but that Christ's human mind alone sustained the pains of death. How have we then an infinite sufferer? This language seems to us an imposition on common minds, and very derogatory to God's justice, as if this attribute could be satisfied by a sophism and a fiction.

We are also told, that Christ is a more interesting object, that his love and mercy are more felt, when he is viewed as the Supreme God, who left his glory to take humanity and to suffer for men. That Trinitarians are strongly moved by this representation, we do not mean to deny; but we think their emotions altogether founded on a misapprehension of their own doctrines. They talk of the second person of the Trinity leaving his glory, and his Father's bosom, to visit and save the world. But this second person, being the unchangeable and

infinite God, was evidently incapable of parting with the least degree of his perfection and felicity. At the moment of his taking flesh, he was as intimately present with his Father as before, and equally with his Father filled heaven and earth and immensity. This Trinitarians acknowledge; and still they profess to be touched and overwhelmed by the amazing humiliation of this immutable being!!—But not only does their doctrine, when fully explained, reduce Christ's humiliation to a fiction, it almost wholly destroys the impressions with which his cross ought to be viewed. According to their doctrine, Christ was, comparatively, no sufferer at all. It is true, his human mind suffered: but this, they tell us, was an infinitely small part of Jesus, bearing no more proportion to his whole nature, than a single hair of our heads to the whole body; or, than a drop to the ocean. The divine mind of Christ, that which was most properly himself, was infinitely happy, at the very moment of the suffering of his humanity. Whilst hanging on the cross, he was the happiest being in the universe, as happy as the Infinite Father; so that, his pains compared with his felicity, were nothing. This Trinitarians do, and must acknowledge. It follows necessarily, from the immutableness of the divine nature, which they ascribe to Christ; so that their system, justly viewed, robs his death of interest, weakens our sympathy with his sufferings, and is, of all others, most unfavourable to a love of Christ, founded on a sense

of his sacrifices for mankind. We esteem our own views to be vastly more affecting, especially those of us, who believe in Christ's pre-existence. It is our belief, that Christ's humiliation was real and entire, that the whole Saviour, and not a part of him, suffered, that his crucifixion was a scene of deep and unmixed agony. As we stand around his cross, our minds are not distracted, or our sensibility weakened, by contemplating him as composed of incongruous and infinitely differing minds, and as having a balance of infinite felicity. We recognize in the dying Jesus but one mind. This, we think, renders his sufferings, and his patience and love in bearing them, incomparably more impressive and affecting, than the system we oppose.

Thirdly. Having thus given our belief on two great points, namely, that there is one God, and that Jesus Christ is a distinct being from and inferior to God, I now proceed to another point on which we lay still greater stress. We believe in the *moral perfections of God.* We consider no part of theology so important as that which treats of God's moral character; and we value our views of Christianity chiefly, as they assert his amiable and venerable attributes.

It may be said, that in regard to this subject, all Christians agree, that all ascribe to the Supreme Being, infinite justice, goodness, and holiness. We reply, that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to

his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government, principles which make him odious. The heathens called Jupiter the Greatest and the Best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real ideas of God by their general language, for in all ages they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his dispositions towards his creatures.

We conceive that Christians have generally leaned towards a very injurious view of the Supreme Being. They have too often felt, as if he were raised by his greatness and sovereignty above the principles of morality, above those eternal laws of equity and rectitude, to which all other beings are subjected. *We* believe, that in no being is the sense of right so strong, so omnipotent, as in God. We believe, that his almighty power is entirely submitted to his perception of rectitude; and this is the ground of our piety. It is not because he is our Creator merely, but because he created us for good and holy purposes; it is not because his will is irresistible, but because his will is the perfection of virtue, that we pay him allegiance. We cannot bow before a being, however great and powerful, who governs tyrannically. We respect nothing but excellence, whether on earth or in heaven. We venerate not the loftiness of God's throne, but the equity of goodness in which it is established.

We believe that God is infinitely good, kind, benevolent, in the proper sense of these words; good in disposition as well as act; good not to a few, but to all: good to every individual, as well as to the general system.

We believe too, that God is just: but we never forget that his justice is the justice of a good being, dwelling in the same mind, and acting in harmony with perfect benevolence. By this attribute we understand God's infinite regard to virtue or moral worth, expressed in a moral government; that is, in giving excellent and equitable laws, and in conferring such rewards, and inflicting such punishments as are most fitted to secure their observance. God's justice has for its end the highest virtue of the creation, and it punishes for this end alone, and thus it coincides with benevolence; for virtue and happiness, though not the same, are inseparably conjoined.

God's justice, thus viewed, appears to us to be in perfect harmony with his mercy. According to the prevalent systems of theology, these attributes are so discordant and jarring, that to reconcile them is the hardest task, and the most wonderful achievement of infinite wisdom. To *us* they seem to be intimate friends, always at peace, breathing the same spirit, and seeking the same end. By God's mercy, we understand not a blind instinctive compassion, which forgives without reflection, and without regard to the interests of virtue. *This*, we acknow-

ledge would be incompatible with justice, and also with enlightened benevolence. God's mercy, as we understand it, desires strongly the happiness of the guilty, but only through their penitence. It has a regard to character as truly as his justice. It defers punishment, and suffers long, that the sinner may return to his duty; but leaves the impenitent and unyielding to the fearful retribution threatened in God's word.

To give our views of God in one word, we believe in his *parental character*. We ascribe to him, not only the name, but the dispositions and principles of a father. We believe that he has a father's concern for his creatures, a father's desire for their improvement, a father's equity in proportioning his commands to their powers, a father's joy in their progress, a father's readiness to receive the penitent, and a father's justice for the incorrigible. We look upon this world as a place of education, in which he is training men by mercies and sufferings, by aids and temptations, by means and opportunities of various virtues, by trials of principle, by the conflicts of reason and passion, by a discipline suited to free and moral beings, for union with himself, and for a sublime and ever-growing virtue in heaven.

Now we object to the systems of religion, which prevail among us, that they are adverse, in a greater or less degree, to these purifying, comforting, and honourable views of God, that they take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute for him a being,

whom we cannot love if we would, and whom we ought not to love if we could. We object, particularly on this ground, to that system, which arrogates to itself the name of orthodoxy, and which is now most industriously propagated through our country. This system teaches, that God brings us into existence wholly depraved, so that under the innocent features of our childhood, is hidden a nature averse to all good, and propense to all evil; and it teaches that God regards us with displeasure before we have acquired power to understand our duties, or reflect upon our actions. Now if there be one plain principle of morality, it is this, that we are accountable beings, only because we have conscience, a power of knowing and performing our duty, and that in as far as we want this power, we are incapable of sin, guilt, or blame. We should call a parent a monster, who should judge and treat his children in opposition to this principle, and yet this enormous immorality is charged on our Father in heaven.

This system also teaches, that God selects from the corrupt mass of men a number to be saved, and that they are plucked, by an irresistible agency, from the common ruin, whilst the rest are commanded, under penalty of aggravated woe, to make a change in their characters, which their natural corruption places beyond their power, and are also promised pardon on conditions, which necessarily avail them

nothing, unless they are favoured with a special operation of God's grace, which he is predetermined to withhold. This mockery of mercy, this insult offered to the misery of the non-elect, by hollow proffers of forgiveness, completes the dreadful system which is continually obtruded upon us as the Gospel, and which strives to monopolize the reputation of sanctity.

That this religious system does not produce all the effects on character, which might be anticipated, we most joyfully admit. It is often, very often, counteracted by nature, conscience, common sense, by the general strain of Scripture, by the mild example and precepts of Christ, and by the positive declarations of God's universal kindness, and perfect equity. But still we think that we see occasionally its unhappy influence. It discourages the timid, gives excuses to the bad, feeds the vanity of the fanatical, and offers shelter to the bad feelings of the malignant. By shocking, as it does, the fundamental principles of morality, and by exhibiting a severe and partial Deity, it tends strongly to pervert the moral faculty, to form a gloomy, forbidding, and servile religion, and to lead men to substitute censoriousness, bitterness, and persecution, for a tender and impartial charity. We think too, that this system which begins with degrading human nature, may be expected to end in pride; for pride grows out of a consciousness of high distinctions,

however attained, and no distinction is so great as that which subsists between the elected and the abandoned of God.

The false and dishonourable views of God, which have now been stated, we feel ourselves bound to resist unceasingly. Other errors we can pass over with comparative indifference. But we ask our opponents to leave to us a God, worthy of our love and trust, in whom our moral sentiments may delight, in whom our weaknesses and sorrows may find refuge. We cling to the divine perfections. We meet them every where in creation, we read them in the Scriptures, we see a lovely image of them in Jesus Christ; and gratitude, love, and veneration call on us to assert them. Reproached as we often are, by men, it is our consolation and happiness, that one of our chief offences is, the zeal with which we vindicate the dishonoured goodness and rectitude of God.

Fourthly. Having thus spoken of the unity of God; of the unity of Jesus, and his inferiority to God; and of the perfections of the divine character; —I now proceed to give our views of the *mediation of Christ*, and of *the purposes of his mission*. With regard to the great object, which Jesus came to accomplish, there seems to be no possibility of mistake. We believe, that he was sent by the Father to effect a moral or spiritual deliverance of mankind; that is, to rescue men from sin and its consequences, and to bring them to a state of everlasting purity

and happiness. We believe, too, that he accomplishes this sublime purpose by a variety of methods; by his instructions respecting God's unity, parental character, and moral government, which are admirably fitted to reclaim the world from idolatry and impiety to the knowledge, love and obedience of the Creator; by his promises of pardon to the penitent, and of divine assistance to those, who labour for progress in moral excellence; by the light which he has thrown on the path of duty; by his own spotless example, in which the loveliness and sublimity of virtue shine forth to warm and quicken as well as guide us to perfection; by his threatenings against incorrigible guilt; by his glorious discoveries of immortality; by his sufferings and death; by that signal event the resurrection, which powerfully bore witness to his divine mission, and brought down to men's senses a future life; by his continual intercession, which obtains for us spiritual aid and blessings; and by the power with which he is invested of raising the dead, judging the world, and conferring the everlasting rewards, promised to the righteous.

We have no desire to conceal the fact, that a difference of opinion exists among us, in regard to an interesting part of Christ's mediation; I mean, in regard to the precise influence of his death on our forgiveness. Some suppose, that this event contributes to our pardon, as it was a principal means of confirming his religion, and of giving it a power

over the mind; in other words, that it procures forgiveness by leading to that repentance and virtue, which is the great and only condition on which forgiveness is bestowed. Many of us are dissatisfied with this explanation, and think that the Scriptures ascribe the remission of sins to Christ's death, with an emphasis so peculiar, that we ought to consider this event as having a special influence in removing punishment, as a condition or method of pardon, without which repentance would not avail us, at least to that extent, which is now promised by the Gospel.

Whilst, however, we differ in explaining the connection between Christ's death and human forgiveness, a connection which we all gratefully acknowledge, we agree in rejecting many sentiments, which prevail in regard to his mediation. The idea, conveyed to common minds by the popular system, that Christ's death had an influence in making God placable or merciful, in quenching his wrath, in awakening his kindness towards men, we reject with horror. We believe, that Jesus, instead of making the Father merciful, is sent by the Father's mercy to be our Saviour; that he is nothing to the human race, but what he is by God's appointment; that he communicates nothing but what God empowers him to bestow; that our Father in heaven is originally, essentially, and eternally placable, and disposed to forgive; and that his unborrowed, underived, and unchangeable love, is the only fountain of what

flows to us through his Son. We conceive, that Jesus is dishonoured, not glorified, by ascribing to him an influence which clouds the splendour of divine benevolence.

We further agree in rejecting, as unscriptural and absurd, the explanation given by the popular system, of the manner in which Christ's death procures forgiveness for men. This system teaches, that man, having sinned against an infinite being, is infinitely guilty; and some even say, that a single transgression, though committed in our early and inconsiderate years, merits the eternal pains of hell. Thus an infinite penalty is due from every human being; and God's justice insists, that it shall be borne either by the offender, or a substitute. Now, from the nature of the case, no substitute is adequate to the work of sustaining the full punishment of a guilty world, save the infinite God himself; and accordingly, God took on him human nature, that he might pay to his own justice the debt of punishment incurred by men, and might enable himself to exercise mercy. Such is the prevalent system. Now, to us, this doctrine seems to carry on its front strong marks of absurdity, and we maintain that Christianity ought not to be encumbered with it, unless it be laid down in the New Testament fully and expressly. We ask our opponents then, to point out some plain passages where it is taught. We ask for one text, in which we are told that God took human nature, that he might appease his own anger towards men,

or make an infinite satisfaction to his own justice:—for one text, which tells us, that human guilt is infinite, and requires a correspondent substitute: that Christ's sufferings owe their efficacy to their being borne by an infinite being; or that his divine nature gives infinite value to the sufferings of the human. Not one word of this description can we find in the Scriptures; not a text which even hints at these strange doctrines. They are altogether, we believe, the fictions of theologians. Christianity is in no degree responsible for them. We are astonished at their prevalence. What can be plainer, than that God cannot, in any sense, be a sufferer, or bear a penalty in the room of his creatures? How dishonourable to him is the supposition, that his justice is now so severe as to exact infinite punishment for the sins of frail and feeble men, and now so easy and yielding as to accept the limited pains of Christ's human soul, as a full equivalent for the infinite and endless woes due from the world? How plain is it also, according to this doctrine, that God, instead of being plenteous in forgiveness, never forgives; for it is absurd to speak of men as forgiven, when their whole punishment is borne by a substitute? A scheme more fitted to bring Christianity into contempt, and less suited to give comfort to a guilty and troubled mind, could not, we think, be easily invented.

We believe too, that this system is unfavourable to the character. It naturally leads men to think,

that Christ came to change God's mind, rather than their own; that the highest object of his mission, was to avert punishment, rather than to communicate holiness; and that a large part of religion consists in disparaging good works and human virtue, for the purpose of magnifying the value of Christ's vicarious sufferings. In this way, a sense of the infinite importance, and indispensable necessity of personal improvement is weakened, and high-sounding praises of Christ's cross seem often to be substituted for obedience to his precepts. For ourselves, we have not so learned Jesus. Whilst we gratefully acknowledge, that he came to rescue us from punishment, we believe, that he was sent on a still nobler errand, namely, to deliver us from sin itself, and to form us to a sublime and heavenly virtue. We regard him as a Saviour, chiefly as he is the light, physician, and guide of the dark, diseased, and wandering mind. No influence in the universe seems to us so glorious, as that over the character; and no redemption so worthy of thankfulness, as the restoration of the soul to purity. Without this, pardon, were it possible, would be of little value. Why pluck the sinner from hell, if a hell be left to burn in his own breast? Why raise him to heaven, if he remain a stranger to its sanctity and love? With these impressions, we are accustomed to value the Gospel, chiefly, as it abounds in effectual aids, motives, excitements to a generous and divine virtue. In this virtue, as in a common centre, we see

all doctrines, precepts, promises meet, and we believe, that faith in this religion is of no worth, and contributes nothing to salvation, any further than as it uses these doctrines, precepts, promises, and the whole life, character, sufferings, and triumphs of Jesus, as the means of purifying the mind, of changing it into the likeness of his celestial excellence.

Fifthly. Having thus stated our views of the highest object of Christ's mission, that it is the recovery of men to virtue, or holiness, I shall now, in the last place, give our views of the *nature of Christian virtue, or true holiness.* We believe that all virtue has its foundation in the moral nature of man, that is, in conscience, or his sense of duty, and in the power of forming his temper and life according to conscience. We believe that these moral faculties are the grounds of responsibility, and the highest distinctions of human nature, and that no act is praiseworthy, any further than it springs from their exertion. We believe that no dispositions, infused into us without our own moral activity, are of the nature of virtue, and therefore, we reject the doctrine of irresistible divine influence on the human mind, moulding it into goodness, as marble is hewn into a statue. Such goodness, if this word may be used, would not be the object of moral approbation, any more than the instinctive affections of inferior animals, or the constitutional amiableness of human beings.

By these remarks, we do not mean to deny the importance of God's aid or Spirit; but by his Spirit we mean a moral, illuminating, and persuasive influence, not physical, not compulsory, not involving a necessity of virtue. We object strongly to the idea of many Christians respecting man's impotence and God's irresistible agency on the heart, believing that they subvert our responsibility and the laws of our moral nature, that they make men machines, that they cast on God the blame of all evil deeds, that they discourage good minds, and inflate the fanatical with wild conceits of immediate and sensible inspiration.

Among the virtues, we give the first place to the *love of God.* We believe that this principle is the true end and happiness of our being, that we were made for union with our Creator, that his infinite perfection is the only sufficient object and true resting place for the insatiable desires and unlimited capacities of the human mind, and that without him, our noblest sentiments, admiration, veneration, hope, and love, would wither and decay. We believe too, that the love of God is not only essential to happiness, but to the strength and perfection of all the virtues; that conscience, without the sanction of God's authority and retributive justice, would be a weak director; that benevolence, unless nourished by communion with his goodness, and encouraged by his smile, could not thrive amidst the selfishness and thanklessness of the world; and that self-go-

vernment, without a sense of the divine inspection, would hardly extend beyond an outward and partial purity. God, as he is essentially goodness, holiness, justice, and virtue, so he is the life, motive, and sustainer of virtue in the human soul.

But whilst we earnestly inculcate the love of God, we believe that great care is necessary to distinguish it from counterfeits. We think that much which is called piety is worthless. Many have fallen into the error, that there can be no excess in feelings, which have God for their object; and, distrusting as coldness, that self-possession, without which virtue and devotion lose all their dignity, they have abandoned themselves to extravagancies, which have brought contempt on piety. Most certainly, if the love of God be that, which often bears its name, the less we have of it the better. If religion be the shipwreck of the understanding, we cannot keep too far from it. On this subject, we always speak plainly. We cannot sacrifice our reason to the reputation of zeal. We owe it to truth and religion, to maintain, that fanaticism, partial insanity, sudden impressions, and ungovernable transports, are any thing rather than piety.

We conceive, that the true love of God is a moral sentiment, founded on a clear perception, and consisting in a high esteem and veneration, of his moral perfections. Thus, it perfectly coincides, and is in fact the same thing, with the love of virtue, rectitude, and goodness. You will easily judge then,

what we esteem the surest and only decisive signs of piety. We lay no stress on strong excitements. We esteem *him*, and *him only*, a pious man, who practically conforms to God's moral perfections and government; who shows his delight in God's benevolence, by loving and serving his neighbour; his delight in God's justice, by being resolutely upright; his sense of God's purity, by regulating his thoughts, imagination, and desires; and whose conversation, business, and domestic life are swayed by a regard to God's presence and authority. In all things else men may deceive themselves. Disordered nerves may give them strange sights, and sounds, and impressions. Texts of Scripture may come to them as from heaven. Their whole souls may be moved, and their confidence in God's favour be undoubting. But in all this there is no religion. The question is, do they love God's commands, in which his character is fully displayed, and give up to these their habits and passions. Without this, ecstasy is a mockery. One surrender of desire to God's will, is worth a thousand transports. We do not judge of the bent of men's minds by their raptures, any more than we judge of the direction of a tree during a storm. We rather suspect loud profession, for we have observed, that deep feeling is generally noiseless, and least seeks display.

We would not, by these remarks be understood as wishing to exclude from religion warmth, and even transport. We honour, and highly value true

religious sensibility. We believe, that Christianity is intended to act powerfully on our whole nature, on the heart, as well as the understanding and the conscience. We conceive of heaven as a state, where the love of God will be exalted into an unbounded fervour and joy; and we desire, in our pilgrimage here, to drink into the spirit of that better world. But we think, that religious warmth is only to be valued, when it springs naturally from an improved character, when it comes unforced, when it is the recompense of obedience, when it is the warmth of a mind which understands God by being like him, and when, instead of disordering, it exalts the understanding, invigorates conscience, gives a pleasure to common duties, and is seen to exist in connection with cheerfulness, judiciousness, and a reasonable frame of mind. When we observe a fervour, called religious, in men whose general character expresses little refinement and elevation, and whose piety seems at war with reason, we pay it little respect. We honour religion too much to give its sacred name to a feverish, forced, fluctuating zeal, which has little power over the life.

Another important branch of virtue, we believe to be love to Christ. The greatness of the work of Jesus, the spirit with which he executed it, and the sufferings which he bore for our salvation, we feel to be strong claims on our gratitude and veneration. We see in nature no beauty to be compared with the loveliness of his character, nor do we find on

earth a benefactor, to whom we owe an equal debt. We read his history with delight, and learn from it the perfection of our nature. We are particularly touched by his death, which was endured for our redemption, and by that strength of charity, which triumphed over his pains. His resurrection is the foundation of our hope of immortality. His intercession gives us boldness to draw nigh to the throne of grace, and we look up to heaven with new desire, when we think, that if we follow him here, we shall there see his benignant countenance, and enjoy his friendship for ever.

I need not express to you our views on the subject of the *benevolent virtues*. We attach such importance to these, that we are sometimes reproached with exalting them above piety. We regard the spirit of love, charity, meekness, forgiveness, liberality, and beneficence, as the badge and distinction of Christians, as the brightest image we can bear of God, as the best proof of piety. On this subject, I need not, and cannot enlarge; but there is one branch of benevolence, which I ought not to pass over in silence, because we think that we conceive of it more highly and justly than many of our brethren. I refer to the duty of candour, charitable judgement, especially towards those who differ in religious opinion. We think, that in nothing have Christians so widely departed from their religion, as in this particular. We read with astonishment and horror the history of the Church; and sometimes

when we look back on the fires of persecution, and the zeal of Christians in building up walls of separation, and in giving up one another to perdition, we feel as if we were reading the records of an infernal, rather than a heavenly kingdom. An enemy to our religion, if asked to describe a Christian, would, with some show of reason, depict him as an idolater of his own distinguished opinions; covered with badges of party; shutting his eyes on the virtues, and his ears on the arguments, of his opponents; arrogating all excellence to his own sect, and all saving power to his own creed; sheltering under the name of pious zeal, the love of domination, the conceit of infallibility, and the spirit of intolerance; and trampling on men's rights, under the pretence of saving their souls.

We can hardly conceive of a plainer obligation on beings of our frail and fallible nature, who are instructed in the duty of candid judgement, than to abstain from condemning men of apparent conscientiousness and sincerity, who are chargeable with no crime but that of differing from us in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and differing too on topics of great and acknowledged obscurity. We are astonished at the hardihood of those, who, with Christ's warnings sounding in their ears, take on them the responsibility of making creeds for his Church, and cast out professors of virtuous lives for imagined errors, for the guilt of thinking for themselves. We know that zeal for truth is the cover for

this usurpation of Christ's prerogative; but we think that zeal for truth, as it is called, is very suspicious, except in men, whose capacities and advantages, whose patient deliberations, and whose improvements in humility, mildness, and candour, give them a right to hope that their views are more just than those of their neighbours. Much of what passes for a zeal for truth, we look upon with little respect, for it often appears to thrive most luxuriantly, where other virtues shoot up thinly and feebly; and we have no gratitude for those reformers, who would force upon us a doctrine, which has not sweetened their own tempers, or made them better men than their neighbours.

We are accustomed to think much of the difficulties attending religious inquiries,—difficulties springing from the slow development of our minds, from the power of early impressions, from the state of society, from human authority, from the general neglect of the reasoning powers, from the want of just principles of criticism, and of important helps in interpreting Scripture, and from various other causes. We find, that on no subject have men, and even good men, engrafted so many strange conceits, wild theories, and fictions of fancy, as on religion; and remembering, as we do, that we ourselves are sharers of the common frailty, we dare not assume infallibility in the treatment of our fellow Christians, or encourage in common Christians, who have little time for investigation, the habit of denouncing and

contemning other denominations, perhaps more enlightened and virtuous than their own. Charity, forbearance, a delight in the virtues of different sects, a backwardness to censure and condemn,—these are virtues, which, however poorly practised by us, we admire and recommend; and we would rather join ourselves to the church in which they abound, than to any other communion, however elated with the belief of its own orthodoxy, however strict in guarding its creed, however burning with zeal against imagined error.

I have thus given the distinguishing views of those Christians in whose names I have spoken. We have embraced this system, not hastily or lightly, but after much deliberation; and we hold it fast, not merely because we believe it to be true, but because we regard it as purifying truth, as a doctrine according to godliness, as able to "work mightily, and to bring forth fruit" in them who believe. That we wish to spread it, we have no desire to conceal; but we think, that we wish its diffusion, because we regard it as more friendly to practical piety and pure morals, than the opposite doctrines; because it gives clearer and nobler views of duty, and stronger motives to its performance; because it recommends religion at once to the understanding and the heart; because it asserts the lovely and venerable attributes of God; because it tends to restore the benevolent spirit of Jesus to his divided and afflicted church; and because it cuts off every hope of God's favour,

except that which springs from practical conformity to the life and precepts of Christ. We see nothing in our views to give offence, save their purity; and it is their purity which makes us seek and hope their extension through the world.

I now turn to the usual addresses of the day

My friend and brother;—You are this day to take upon you important duties; to be clothed with an office, which the Son of God did not disdain; to devote yourself to that religion, which the most hallowed lips have preached, and the most precious blood sealed. We trust that you will bring to this work a willing mind, a firm purpose, a martyr's spirit, a readiness to toil and suffer for the truth, a devotion of your best powers to the interests of piety and virtue. I have spoken of the doctrines, which you will probably preach: but I do not mean, that you are to give yourself to controversy. You will remember, that good practice is the end of preaching, and will labour to make your people holy livers, rather than skilful disputants. Be careful, lest the desire of defending what you deem truth, and of repelling reproach and misrepresentation, turn you aside from your great business, which is to fix in men's minds a living conviction of the obligation, simplicity, and happiness of Christian virtue. The best way to vindicate your sentiments, is to show, in your preaching and life, their intimate connection with Christian morals, with a high and delicate sense of duty, with candour towards your op-

posers, with inflexible integrity, and with an habitual reverence for God. If any light can pierce and scatter the clouds of prejudice, it is that of a pure example. You are to preach a system which has nothing to recommend it, but its fitness to make men better; which has no unintelligible doctrines for the mystical, no extravagancies for the fanatical, no dreams for the visionary, no contradictions for the credulous, which asks no sacrifice of men's understandings, but only of their passions and vices; and the best and only way to recommend such a system is, to show forth its power in purifying and exalting the character.—My brother, may your life preach more loudly than your lips. Be to this people a pattern of all good works, and may your instructions derive authority from a well grounded belief in your hearers, that you speak from the heart, that you preach from experience, that the truth which you dispense has wrought powerfully in your own breast, that God, and Jesus, and Heaven are not merely words on your lips, but most affecting realities to your mind, and springs of hope and consolation and strength, in all your trials. Thus labouring, may you reap abundantly, and have a testimony of your faithfulness, not only in your own conscience, but in the esteem, love, virtues, and improvements of your people.

Brethren of this church and society;—We rejoice with you in the prospects of this day. We rejoice in the zeal, unanimity and liberality, with which

you have secured to yourselves the administration of God's word and ordinances, according to your own understanding of the Scriptures. We thank God, that he has disposed you to form an association, on the true principles of Christianity and of Protestantism; that you have solemnly resolved to call no man master in religion, to take your faith from no human creed, to submit your consciences to no human authority; but to repair to the Gospel, to read it with your own eyes, to exercise upon it your own understanding, to search it, as if not a sect existed around you, and follow it wherever it may lead you. Brethren, hold fast your Christian and Protestant liberty. We wish you continued peace, and growing prosperity. We pray God, that your good works may glorify your Christian profession, that your candour and serious attention may encourage our young brother in the arduous work to which you have called him; and that your union with him, beginning in hope, may continue in joy, and may issue in the friendship and union of Heaven.

To all who hear me, I would say, with the Apostle, *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.* Do not, brethren, shrink from the duty of searching God's word for yourselves, through fear of human censure and denunciation. Do not think that you may innocently follow the opinions which prevail around you, without investigation, on the ground that Christianity is now so purified from errors, as

to need no laborious research. There is much reason to believe, that Christianity is at this moment dishonoured by gross and cherished corruptions. If you remember the darkness which hung over the Gospel for ages; if you consider the impure union, which still subsists in almost every Christian country between the Church and the State, and which enlists men's selfishness and ambition on the side of established error; if you recollect in what degree the spirit of intolerance has checked free inquiry, not only before, but since the Reformation; you will see that Christianity cannot have freed itself from all the human inventions which disfigured it under the papal tyranny. No. Much stubble is yet to be burnt; much rubbish to be removed; many gaudy decorations which a false taste has hung around Christianity, must be swept away; and the earth-born fogs, which have long shrouded it, must be scattered, before this divine fabric will rise before us in its native and awful majesty, in its harmonious proportions, in its mild and celestial splendours. This glorious reformation in the church we hope, under God's blessing, from the demolition of human authority in matters of religion, from the fall of those hierarchies, huge establishments, general convocations or assemblies and other human institutions, by which the minds of individuals are oppressed under the weight of numbers, and a papal dominion is perpetuated in the Protestant Church. Our earnest prayer to God is, that he will "overturn,

and overturn, and overturn" the strong holds of spiritual usurpation, "until HE shall come whose right it is" to rule the minds of men; that the conspiracy of ages against the liberty of Christianity may be brought to an end; that the servile assent, so long yielded to human creeds, may give place to honest and fearless inquiry into the Scriptures; and that Christianity thus purified from error, may put forth its almighty energy, and prove itself, by its ennobling influence on the mind, to be indeed "the power of God unto salvation."

NOTE.

WE are told by Trinitarians that Jesus Christ is the supreme God, the same Being as the Father, and that a leading end of Christianity is to reveal him in this character. Were this true, we should expect to hear Jesus continually spoken of as the supreme God; and the more so, as various circumstances attending his appearance, naturally led men to view him in a very different light. Now it is notorious, that this is not the case; but on the contrary, Jesus is habitually *distinguished* from God, and spoken of as inferior to him. It is said, however, that in some passages Jesus is called God; and as these are the strength of the Trinitarian argument, I propose to give them a brief consideration.

The first passage of this kind in the New Testament is found, Matthew i. 23. "A virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Whoever consults the prophecy, Isa. vii. from which this passage is taken, will have reason to think, with the learned and "orthodox" Bishop Lowth, that this text primarily related to a child, which was to be born in the time of Isaiah; and of course that it can have no weight in the present controversy. Supposing, however, this criticism to be unfounded,

any person acquainted with the Hebrew method of giving names, will see that this passage, if belonging to Christ alone, is no proof that he is strictly the supreme God. It was only a prediction, that by the coming, instruction, miracles, and offices of Christ, God was to manifest himself to men with peculiar clearness, to visit them and dwell with them. Among the Jews it was very common to give to individuals names, expressive of the leading circumstances and purposes of their lives; and what deserves attention, these appellations often contained the name of God in a manner which may astonish a modern reader. Cruden, near the end of his Concordance, has given the meaning of the proper names which occur in Scripture. He tells us, that Elijah means God the Lord, or the strong Lord; Elisha, Salvation of God, or God that saves; Jotham, Perfection of the Lord; Ishmael, God who hears; Lemuel, GOD WITH THEM. Now to a people accustomed to such names, what must have been the import of the passage under consideration? Could they have understood any thing but what I have stated? In this passage, then, Jesus Christ is not spoken of as the supreme God.

In looking through the gospels of Matthew, and Mark, and Luke, we meet not an instance in which Christ is called God, although we are told that a leading object of these books is to exhibit him in this character. We have to wait for this phraseology until we arrive at the 1st verse of the 1st chapter of John: "The word was God." Now in this passage we are taught, not that Jesus is God, but that the *Word* is God; and some learned men have insisted, that by "*the Word*" we are not to understand Jesus himself, but the *Wisdom of God* which dwelt in him; and that the passage was intended by John to oppose certain errors which sprung up among the Gnostics in the first age of the Church, and which must now be known in order to a full understanding of the introduction to his gospel. But admitting that Jesus is "*the Word*," which seems to me probable, it is very plain that the Evangelist did not intend to represent him as literally and strictly the supreme God; for he says once and again in this very place, "The word was *with* God." Now if "the Word" be a person, and if this person "was *with* God," it is very obvious that he cannot be God himself, the *very being with whom he dwelt*. There is a plain distinction between God and the Word, such as obliges us to depart

from the most literal sense in interpreting the clause, "the Word was God;" and when it is considered, that the term God is sometimes applied in the Scriptures to men and higher beings, who in authority or other circumstances resemble the supreme God, we shall see that we have authority for explaining the term with a degree of latitude in the text under consideration.

If Jesus be "*the Word*," we must consider him as called by this name, because he is the *expression*, or the *revealer* of the mind and will of God: and when we are told that "the Word was God," we are to understand, not that he is identically and literally the supreme God, but that he was so bright and clear an expression of God's mind, that it was not so much Jesus, as God himself, who appeared and taught mankind. In accordance with this explanation, we find Jesus frequently expressing the sentiment, that it was *not he*, but *God*, whom the people saw and heard in his miracles and instructions. "He that believeth on me believeth *not on me*, but on him that sent me; and he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me. The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, *he* doeth the works." Thus "the Word" was God. I can illustrate my meaning by a familiar case. Suppose that we were to obtain an ancient book, written for the purpose of recommending Plato to the admirers of Socrates, and that among various declarations of Plato's striking resemblance to Socrates, and peculiar intimacy with him, we should find expressions to this effect; "That Plato was in the beginning with Socrates, and that Plato *was* Socrates; that whoever saw and heard Plato, saw and heard, not Plato, but Socrates; and that as long as Plato lived, Socrates lived and taught."—What should we infer from these expressions; That Plato was literally Socrates, that Socrates and Plato were numerically one and the same being? Should we not rather consider the language as a strong and emphatic manner of teaching us, how entirely Plato was formed on the doctrine, and imbued with the spirit of Socrates? It is not unusual to call one person by the name of another whom he strongly resembles. Thus John the Baptist is called Elias, because he came in the spirit and power of Elias. So a distinguished orator is called Cicero. We say of a son who has a strong likeness to his father in countenance and character, "He is his father in every respect." In this way

he that seeth Jesus, seeth the Father also; and we see with what propriety Jesus is called God, if this name be really applied to him in the text.

The next passage in which Jesus is supposed to be called God, and the only other in the four gospels, is John xx. 28. "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God." The great stress laid on this text is no evidence of a good and well supported cause. Thomas, overpowered with astonishment, and too full of emotion to give an orderly arrangement to his thoughts, breaks out into the sudden exclamation, My Lord! and My God! and theologians build an essential doctrine on this passionate language of an uninspired man! Whether Thomas addressed Jesus in the first clause of the sentence, My Lord! and then in a pious rapture looked up to heaven and exclaimed, My God! or whether he left the sentence unfinished, through the force of his feelings, so that his precise meaning cannot be ascertained, I will not determine. But that he did not intend to recognise Jesus, who stood before him *in a human body*, as the invisible and infinite God, seems to me very plain from the nature of the case, and from the circumstances which produced the exclamation. Thomas had refused to believe the testimony of the other disciples, that they had seen Jesus, and had insisted on seeing and handling him before he would admit his resurrection. Jesus accordingly appeared and said to Thomas, "Behold my hands, and thrust thy hands into my side, and be no longer faithless, but believing;" that is, Believe that I am risen, as thy brethren have asserted. This was the evidence, which drew from Thomas the exclamation under consideration. Now to suppose, that Thomas was not only convinced of Christ's resurrection, but believed him to be the supreme God, from seeing and handling his body, is to set him down as a very illogical reasoner, and to explain his language very uncandidly. A directly opposite inference would have been vastly more rational. It appears from the language of Jesus, immediately following, that the belief which Thomas intended to express in his vehement language was founded on the *evidence* of *his senses*. "Thomas, because thou hast *seen* me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Now what was the natural inference which a man of good sense would have drawn from seeing

and handling Jesus? Plainly this, that he was risen from the dead; not that he was strictly and literally the infinite God, a being who falls under none of our senses, "whom no eye hath seen or can see." Thomas's language, when thus viewed in connection with the circumstances under which it is uttered, gives no aid to Trinitarianism; and we wonder that a broken exclamation of a man so strongly moved, should be appealed to as a main proof of a leading doctrine of Christianity.

The next passage in which Christ is supposed to be spoken of as God, is Acts xx. 28. "Feed the Church of God, which he hath bought with his own blood." We learn from Griesbach's critical edition of the New Testament, a work approved by learned Trinitarians as highly as by others, that the word *God* in this verse was not probably written by Luke, the author of the book of Acts; that it is a false reading; that the passage as it came from the hands of Luke, probably stood thus, "Feed the Church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Christ then is called in this passage, not God, but the Lord, a title often given him as expressive of the dominion which he received from his Father over the Church. This text has nothing to do with the controversy before us.

We now come to the next passage in which there is any reason to suppose that Jesus is called God, viz. Romans ix. 5. Paul is speaking of the Israelites, "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever." There are strong reasons for thinking, that this passage should be differently translated, so as to stand thus, "of whom Christ came, *God who is over all be blessed for ever.*" The last clause, according to this version, is a devout ascription to God, not a declaration of Christ's dignity. Allowing however our translation to remain, it will not justify the strange belief that Jesus is literally the supreme God. In this passage it is worthy of remark, that Christ is first spoken of as a natural descendant of the Israelites, a circumstance as inconsistent with supreme divinity as any which can be well imagined. Now could any persons acquainted with Paul, with his belief of God's unity, eternity, and invisibleness,—could any such persons, on reading this passage have imagined, that the Apostle intended to declare Jesus, whom he called a Jew by birth, to be the supreme God, infinite, eternal, unbegotten, and invisible?

How natural and necessary is it to restrain and modify the last clause by the first! Jesus, we know, was exalted by God to be head over all things to the church, to be Lord of Jews and Gentiles, of the living and the dead, *i. e.* of all mankind. We also know that the title God, was frequently applied to persons possessing extensive power and dominion. How much more natural is it then to suppose, that Paul intended to express Christ's exaltation to universal empire, by calling him God over all, than to suppose that he meant to ascribe proper and supreme divinity to a descendant of the Israelites? These arguments show that the passage does not support Trinitarianism, even if translated rightly in our English Bible, of which, however, I am by no means satisfied.

The next passage in which Christ is supposed to be called God is 1 Timothy iii. 16. "God was manifest in the flesh."—On this it is sufficient to say, that Griesbach excludes the word "God" from the text, or supposes that it was not written by the apostle Paul, but has been inserted either by design or mistake since his time. No candid and learned Trinitarian will consider this passage as an authority in the present controversy.

Another instance of the application of the name God to Jesus Christ, is supposed to be found in Hebrews i. 6. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God! is for ever and ever." On this passage it may be observed that several learned men translate it thus, "God is thy throne for ever and ever;" a version which renders it similar to others in which God is said to be our rock, fortress, &c.—If this be correct, the word God does not belong to Christ. But admitting our present translation, if the reader will proceed to the next verse, he will see that this title is applied to Christ in a subordinate sense. "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore GOD, even THY GOD hath anointed thee," &c. Here the Son is plainly distinguished from God, and said to have a God. Could the sacred writer have intended to represent Jesus as the same being with HIM who is declared to be his God?

One more text is sometimes thought an instance of the application of the name of God to Christ, viz. 1 John v. 20. "This is the true God and eternal life." But even in our imperfect translation of the text to which these words belong, the distinction be-

tween the true God and his Son Jesus Christ is so distinctly stated, that a reader of plain sense will be little in danger of applying these words to Jesus Christ. I have not thought it necessary to notice 1 John iii. 16, because the word God, as the italics show, is an addition of our translators, without any warrant from the original.

I have thus collected all the passages in the New Testament in which Jesus is supposed to be called God; and the result is, that in two or three passages, this title may be given him; but in every case, it is given in connections and under circumstances, which imply that it is not to be received in its highest and most literal sense. To all these considerations let it be added, that the word God is applied more frequently in Scripture to human beings, than to Jesus. And what is the inference from the whole? If Jesus were the supreme God; if this were an essential part of his religion; if the Scriptures were most solicitous to exhibit him in this light;—can we believe that he would be habitually *distinguished* from God; that this his true title should be given to him less frequently than to men; that we should meet but two or three applications of it to him: and that it should then be found in passages which imply that he is not the supreme God, but a distinct or subordinate being? So weak are the strongest proofs of Trinitarianism. The texts which call Christ, God, are the main pillars of this doctrine. Who then can believe that this is the vital, central, essential truth of our religion, without dishonouring revelation, and reflecting upon the wisdom and goodness of its Author?

SERMON III.

ON THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. EZRA STILES GANNETT,

AS COLLEAGUE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, IN FEDERAL STREET, BOSTON.

JUNE 30th, 1824.

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."—MATT. x. 16.

THE communication of moral and religious truth is the most important office committed to men. The Son of God came into the world not to legislate for nations, not to command armies, not to sit on the throne of universal monarchy; but to teach religion, to establish the empire of truth and holiness in the souls of men. The highest end of human nature is duty, virtue, piety, excellence, moral greatness, spiritual glory; and he who effectually labours for these, is taking part with God, in God's noblest work. The Christian ministry, then, which has for its end men's spiritual improvement and salvation, and which is entrusted for this end with weapons of heavenly temper and power, deserves to be ranked amongst God's most beneficent institu-

tions and men's most honourable labours. The occasion requires that this institution should be our principal topic.

How happy a change has taken place since the words of Christ in the text were spoken! Ministers are no longer sent forth into the midst of wolves. Through the labours, sufferings, and triumphs of apostles, martyrs, and good and great men in successive ages, Christianity has become the professed and honoured religion of the most civilized nations, and its preachers are exposed to very different temptations from those of savage persecution. Still our text has an application to the present time. We see our Saviour commanding his apostles, to regard in their ministry the circumstances of the age in which they lived. Surrounded with foes, they were to exercise the wisdom or prudence, of which the serpent was in ancient times the emblem, and to join with it the innocence and mildness of the dove. And in like manner, the Christian minister is at all periods to regard the signs, the distinctive marks and character of the age to which he belongs, and must accommodate his ministry to its wants and demands. Accordingly, I propose to consider some of the leading traits of the present age, and the influence which they should have on a Christian teacher.

I. The state of the world, compared with the past, may be called *enlightened*, and requires an enlightened ministry. It hardly seems necessary to

prove, that religion should be dispensed by men who at least keep pace with the intellect of the age in which they live. Some passages of Scripture, however, have been wrested to prove, that an unlearned ministry is that which God particularly honours. He always chooses, we are told, "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise." But texts of this description are misunderstood, through the very ignorance which they are adduced to support. The wise, who are spoken of contemptuously in the New Testament, were not really enlightened men, but pretenders to wisdom, who substituted dreams of imagination and wild hypothesis for sober inquiry into God's works, and who knew comparatively nothing of nature or the human mind. The present age has quite a different illumination from that, in which ancient philosophy prided itself. It is marked by great and obvious improvements in the methods of reasoning and inquiry, and by the consequent discovery and diffusion of a great mass of physical and moral truth, wholly unknown in the time of Christ. Now we affirm, that such an age demands an enlightened ministry. We want teachers, who will be able to discern and unfold the consistency of revealed religion with the new lights which are breaking in from nature; and who will be able to draw, from all men's discoveries in the outward world and in their own souls, illustrations, analogies, and arguments for Christianity. We have reason to believe, that God, the author of

nature and revelation, has established a harmony between them, and that their beams are intended to mingle and shed a joint radiance; and consequently, other things being equal, that teacher is best fitted to dispense Christianity, whose compass of mind enables him to compare what God is teaching in his works and in his word, and to present the truths of religion with those modifications and restraints which other acknowledged truths require. Christianity now needs dispensers, who will make history, nature, and the improvements of society, tributary to its elucidation and support; who will show its adaptation to man as an ever progressive being; who will be able to meet the objections to its truth, which will naturally be started in an active, stirring, inquiring age; and though last, not least, who will have enough of mental and moral courage to detect and renounce the errors in the church, on which such objections are generally built. In such an age, a ministry is wanted, which will furnish discussions of religious topics, not inferior at least in intelligence to those, which people are accustomed to read and hear on other subjects. Christianity will suffer, if at a time, when vigour and acuteness of thinking are carried into all other departments, the pulpit should send forth nothing but wild declamation, positive assertion, or dull common-places with which even childhood is satiated. Religion must be seen to be the friend and quickener of intellect. It must be exhibited with clearness of reasoning and

variety of illustration; nor ought it to be deprived of the benefits of a pure and felicitous diction and of rich and glowing imagery, where these gifts fall to the lot of the teacher. It is not meant that every minister must be a man of genius; for genius is one of God's rarest inspirations; and of all the beaming and breathings of genius, perhaps the rarest is eloquence. I mean only to say, that the age demands of those who devote themselves to the administration of Christianity, that they should feel themselves called upon for the highest cultivation and fullest development of the intellectual nature. Instead of thinking, that the ministry is a refuge for dullness, and that whoever can escape from the plough is fit for God's spiritual husbandry, we ought to feel that no profession demands more enlarged thinking and more various acquisitions of truth.

In proportion as society becomes enlightened, *talent* acquires influence. In rude ages, bodily strength is the most honourable distinction; and in subsequent times, military prowess and skill confer mastery and eminence. But as society advances, mind, thought, becomes the sovereign of the world; and accordingly, at the present moment, profound and glowing thought, though breathing only from the silent page, exerts a kind of omnipotent and omnipresent energy. It crosses oceans and spreads through nations; and at one and the same moment, the conceptions of a single mind are electrifying

and kindling multitudes, through wider regions than the Roman eagle overshadowed. This agency of mind on mind, I repeat it, is the true sovereignty of the world; and kings and heroes are becoming impotent by the side of men of deep and fervent thought. In such a state of things, religion would wage a very unequal war, if divorced from talent and cultivated intellect, if committed to weak and untaught minds. God plainly intends, that it should be advanced by human agency; and does he not then intend, to summon to its aid the mightiest and noblest powers with which man is gifted?

Let it not be said, that Christianity has an intrinsic glory, a native beauty, which no art or talent of man can heighten; that Christianity is one and the same, by whatever lips it is communicated; and it needs nothing but the most naked expositions of its truths, to accomplish its saving purposes. Who does not know, that all truth takes a hue and form from the soul through which it passes; that in every mind it is invested with peculiar associations; and that consequently the same truth is quite a different thing, when exhibited by men of different habits of thought and feeling? Who does not know, that the sublimest doctrines lose in some hands all their grandeur, and the loveliest all their attractiveness? Who does not know, how much the diffusion and power of any system, whether physical, moral, or political, depend on the order according to which it is arranged, on the broad and consistent views

which are given of it, on the connections which it is shown to hold with other truths, on the analogies by which it is illustrated, adorned, and enforced, and though last, not least, on the clearness and energy of the style in which it is conveyed? "Nothing is needed in religion," some say, "but the naked truth." But I apprehend, that there is no such thing as naked truth, at least as far as moral subjects are concerned. Truth, which relates to God, and duty, and happiness, and a future state, is always *humanized*, if I may so use the word, by passing through a human mind; and when communicated powerfully, it will always be found to come to us in drapery, thrown round it by the imagination, reason, and moral feelings of the teacher. It comes to us warm and living with the impressions and affections which it has produced in the soul from which it issues; and it ought so to come; for the highest evidence of moral truth is found in the moral principles and feelings of our nature, and therefore it fails of its best support, unless it is seen to accord with and to act upon these. The evidence of Christianity, which operates most universally, is not history nor miracles, but its correspondence to the highest capacities, deepest wants, and purest aspirations of our nature, to the cravings of an immortal Spirit; and when it comes to us from a mind, in which it has discovered nothing of this adaptation, and has touched none of these springs, it wants one of its chief signatures of divinity. Christianity is not then to

be exhibited nakedly. It owes much of its power to the mind, which communicates it; and the greater the enlargement and development of the mind of which it has possessed itself, and from which it flows, the wider and deeper will be its action on the soul.

It may be said without censoriousness, that the ordinary mode in which Christianity has been exhibited in past times, does not suit the illumination of the present. That mode has been too narrow, technical, pedantic. Religion has been made a separate business, and a dull, unsocial, melancholy business too; instead of being manifested as a truth, which bears on and touches every thing human, as a universal spirit, which ought to breathe through and modify all our desires and pursuits, all our trains of thought and emotion. And this narrow, forbidding mode of exhibiting Christianity, is easily explained by its early history. Monks shut up in cells; a priesthood cut off by celibacy from the sympathies and most interesting relations of life; and Universities enslaved to a scholastic logic, and taught to place wisdom in verbal subtleties and unintelligible definitions; these took Christianity into their keeping; and at their chilling touch, this generous religion, so full of life and affection, became a dry, frigid, abstract system. Christianity, as it came from their hands, and has been transmitted by a majority of Protestant divines, reminds us of the human form, compressed by swathing bands, until every joint is rigid, every movement constrained, and almost all

the beauty and grace of nature obliterated. Instead of regarding it as an heavenly institution, designed to perfect our *whole* nature, to offer awakening and purifying objects to the intellect, imagination, and heart, to develop every capacity of devout and social feeling, to form a rich, various, generous virtue, divines have cramped and tortured the Gospel into various systems, composed in the main of theological riddles and contradictions; and this religion of love has been made to inculcate a monkish and dark-visaged piety, very hostile to the free expansion and full enjoyment of all our faculties and social affections. Great improvements indeed in this particular are taking place among Christians of almost every denomination. Religion has been brought from the cell of the monk, and the school of the verbal disputant, into life and society; and its connections with all our pursuits and feelings have been made manifest. Still, Christianity, I apprehend, is not viewed in sufficiently broad lights to meet the spirit of an age, which is tracing connections between all objects of thought and branches of knowledge, and which cannot but distrust an alleged revelation, in as far as it is seen to want harmonies and affinities with other parts of God's system, and especially with human nature and human life.

II. The age in which we live demands not only an enlightened but an *earnest* ministry, it is an age of earnestness and excitement. Men feel and think at present with more energy than formerly. There

is more of interest and fervour. We learn now from experience, what might have been inferred from the purposes of our Creator, that civilization and refinement are not, as has been sometimes thought, inconsistent with sensibility; that the intellect may grow without exhausting or overshadowing the heart. The human mind was never more in earnest than at the present moment. The political revolutions which form such broad features and distinctions of our age, have sprung from a new and deep working in the human soul. Men have caught glimpses, however indistinct, of the worth, dignity, rights, and great interests of their nature; and a thirst for untried good, and impatience of long endured wrongs, have broken out wildly, like the fires of Etna, and shaken and convulsed the earth. It is impossible not to discern this increased fervour of mind in every department of life. A new spirit of improvement is abroad. The imagination can no longer be confined to the acquisitions of past ages, but is kindling the passions by vague but noble ideas of blessings never yet attained. Multitudes, unwilling to wait the slow pace of that great innovator, time, are taking the work of reform into their own hands. Accordingly, the reverence for antiquity and for age-hallowed establishments, and the passion for change and melioration, are now arrayed against each other in open hostility; and all great questions, affecting human happiness, are debated with the eagerness of party. The character of the

age is stamped very strongly on its literary productions. Who that can compare the present with the past, is not struck with the bold and earnest spirit of the literature of our times. It refuses to waste itself on trifles, or to minister to mere gratification. Almost all that is written has now a bearing on the great interests of human nature. Fiction is no longer a mere amusement; but transcendent genius, accommodating itself to the imaginative and excitable character of the age, has seized upon this province of literature, and turned fiction from a toy into a mighty engine, and under the light tale, is breathing through the community either its reverence for the old or its thirst for the new; communicates the spirit and the lessons of history; unfolds the operations of religious and civil institutions, and defends or assails new theories of education or morals, by exhibiting them in life and action. The poetry of the age is equally characteristic. It has a deeper and more impressive tone than comes to us from what has been called the Augustan age of English literature. The regular, elaborate, harmonious strains which delighted a former generation, are now accused, I say not how justly, of playing too much on the surface of nature and of the heart. Men want and demand a more thrilling note, a poetry which pierces beneath the exterior of life to the depths of the soul, and which lays open its mysterious workings, borrowing from the whole outward creation fresh images and correspondences,

with which to illuminate the secrets of the world within us. So keen is this appetite, that extravagances of imagination and violations both of taste and moral sentiment are forgiven, when conjoined with what awakens strong emotion; and the most stirring is the most popular poetry, even though it issue from the desolate soul of a misanthrope and a libertine, and exhale poison and death.

Now, religion ought to be dispensed in accommodation to this spirit and character of our age. Men desire excitement, and religion must be communicated in a more exciting form. It must be seen not only to correspond and to be adapted to the intellect, but to furnish nutriment and appeals to the highest and profoundest sentiments of our nature. It must not be exhibited in the dry, pedantic divisions of a scholastic theology; nor must it be set forth and tricked out in the light drapery of an artificial rhetoric, in prettiness of style, in measured sentences, with an insipid floridness, and in the form of elegantly feeble essays. No; it must come from the soul in the language of earnest conviction and strong feeling. Men will not now be trifled with. They listen impatiently to great subjects treated with apathy. They want a religion which will take a strong hold upon them; and no system, I am sure, can now maintain its ground, which wants the power of awakening real and deep interest in the soul. It is objected to Unitarian Christianity, that it does not possess this heart-stirring energy; and if so, it will,

and still more, it ought to fall; for it does not suit the spirit of our times, nor the essential and abiding spirit of human nature. Men will prefer even a fanaticism which is in earnest, to a pretended rationality, which leaves untouched all the great springs of the soul, which never lays a quickening hand on our love and veneration, our awe and fear, our hope and joy.

It is obvious, I think, that the spirit of the age, which demands a more exciting administration of Christianity, begins to be understood and is responded to by preachers. Those of us whose memory extends back but a little way, can see a revolution taking place in this country. "The repose of the pulpit" has been disturbed. In England the established church gives broad symptoms of awaking; and the slumbering incumbents of a state religion, either roused by sympathy, or aware of the necessity of self-defence, are beginning to exhibit the energies of the freer and more zealous sects around them.

In such an age, earnestness should characterize the ministry: and by this I mean not a louder voice or a more vehement gesture; I mean no tricks of oratory; but a solemn conviction that religion is a great concern, and a solemn purpose that its claims shall be felt by others. To suit such an age, a minister must communicate religion, not only as a result of reasoning, but as a matter of experience, with that inexpressible character of reality, that life and

power, which accompany truths drawn from a man's own soul. We ought to speak of religion as something which we ourselves know. Its influences, struggles, joys, sorrows should be delineated from our own history. The life and sensibility which we would spread should be strong in our own breasts. This is the only genuine unfailing spring of an earnest ministry. Men may work themselves into a fervour by artificial means, but the flame is unsteady, "a crackling of thorns" on a cold hearth; and after all, it is hard for the most successful art to give even for a time that soul-subduing tone to the voice, that air of native feeling to the countenance, and that raciness and freshness to the conception, which come from an experimental sense of religious truth; and accordingly I would suggest, that the most important part of theological education, even in this enlightened age, is not the communication of knowledge, essential as that is, but the conversion and exaltation of religious knowledge and belief into a living, practical, and soul-kindling conviction. Much as the age requires intellectual culture in a minister, it requires still more, that his acquisitions of truth should be instinct with life and feeling; that he should deliver his message not mechanically and "in the line of his profession," but with the sincerity and earnestness of a man bent on great effects; that he should speak of God, of Christ, of the dignity and loveliness of Christian virtue, of heaven and redemption, not as of tradi-

tions and historical records, about which he has only read, but as realities which he understands and feels in the very depths of his soul.

III. The present is an age of *free and earnest inquiry on the subject of religion*, and consequently an age, in which the extremes of scepticism and bigotry, and a multiplicity of sects, and a diversity of interpretations of the sacred volume, must be expected; and these circumstances of the times influence and modify the duties of the ministry. Free inquiry cannot exist without generating a degree of scepticism; and against this influence, infinitely more blighting than any error of any sect, a minister is bound to erect every barrier. The human mind by a natural re-action is undoubtedly tending, after its long vassalage, to licentious speculation. Men have begun to send keen, searching glances into old institutions, whether of religion, literature, or policy; and have detected so many abuses, that a suspicion of what is old has in many cases taken place of the veneration for antiquity. In such an age, Christianity must be subjected to a rigid scrutiny. Church establishments and state patronage cannot screen it from investigation; and its ministers, far from being called to remove it from the bar of reason, where God has chosen that it should appear, are only bound to see that its claims be fairly and fully made known; and to this they are solemnly bound; and consequently it is one of their first duties to search deeply and understand

thoroughly the true foundations and evidences on which their religion stands. Now it seems to me, that just in proportion as the human mind makes progress, the *inward* evidences of Christianity, the marks of divinity which it wears on its own brow, are becoming more and more important. I refer to the evidences, which are drawn from its excellence, purity, and happy influences; from its adaptation to the spiritual wants, to the weakness and the greatness of human nature; from the original and unborrowed character, the greatness of soul, and the celestial loveliness of its founder; from its unbounded benevolence, corresponding with the spirit of the universe; and from its views of God's paternal character and purposes, of human duty and perfection, and of a future state; views manifestly tending to the exaltation and perpetual improvement of our nature, yet wholly opposed to the character of the age in which they were unfolded. The historical and miraculous proofs of Christianity are indeed essential and impregnable; but, without superseding these, the inward proofs of which I speak, are becoming more and more necessary, and exert a greater power, in proportion as the moral discernment and sensibilities of men are strengthened and enlarged. And if this be true, then Christianity is endangered, and scepticism fortified, by nothing so much as by representations of the religion, which sully its native lustre and darken its inward signatures of a heavenly origin; and accordingly the first

and most solemn duty of its ministers is, to rescue it from such perversions; to see that it be not condemned for doctrines, for which it is in no respect responsible; and to vindicate its character as eminently a *rational* religion, that is, a religion consistent with itself, with the great principles of human nature, with God's acknowledged attributes, and with those indestructible convictions, which spring almost instinctively from our moral constitution, and which grow stronger and stronger as the human mind is developed. A professed revelation carrying contradiction on its front, and wounding those sentiments of justice and goodness, which are the highest test of moral truth, cannot stand; and those, who thus exhibit Christianity, however pure their aim, are shaking its foundations more deeply than its open and inveterate foes.

But free inquiry not only generates occasional scepticism, but much more a diversity of opinion among the believers of Christianity; and to this the ministry must have a special adaptation. In such an age the ministry must in a measure be controversial. In particular, a minister, who after serious investigation attaches himself to that class of Christians, to which we of this religious society are known to belong, cannot but feel that the painful office of conflict with other denominations is laid upon him; for whilst we deny the Christian name to none who acknowledge Jesus as their Saviour and Lord, we do deliberately believe, that by many who confess him

his religion is mournfully disfigured. We believe, that piety at present is robbed in no small degree of its singleness, energy, and happiness, by the multiplication in the church of objects of supreme worship; by the division of the One God into three persons, who sustain different relations to mankind; and above all by the dishonourable views formed of the moral character and administration of the Deity. Errors relating to God seem to us among the most pernicious that can grow up among Christians; for they darken, and, in the strong language of Scripture, "turn into blood" the sun of the spiritual universe. Around just views of the divine character all truths and all virtues naturally gather; and although some minds of native irrepressible vigour may rise to greatness, in spite of dishonourable conceptions of God, yet, as a general rule, human nature cannot spread to its just proportions under their appalling, enslaving, heart-withering control. We discover very plainly, as we think, in the frequent torpor of the conscience and heart in regard to religious obligation, the melancholy influences of that system, so prevalent among us, which robs our heavenly Father of his paternal attributes. Indeed it seems impossible for the conscience, under such injurious representations of the divine character, to discharge intelligently its solemn office of enforcing love to God as man's highest duty; and accordingly when religious excitements take place under this gloomy system, they bear the marks of a morbid

action, much more than of a healthy, restorative progress of the moral nature.

These errors a minister of liberal views of Christianity will feel himself bound to withstand. But let me not be understood, as if I would have the ministry given chiefly to controversy, and would turn the pulpit into a battery for the perpetual assault of adverse sects. Oh no. Other strains than those of warfare should predominate in this sacred place. A minister may be faithful to truth without brandishing perpetually the weapons of controversy. Occasional discussions on disputed doctrines are indeed demanded by the zeal, with which error is maintained. But it becomes the preacher to remember, that there is a silent, indirect influence, more sure and powerful than direct assault on false opinions. The most effectual method of expelling error is, not to meet it sword in hand, but gradually to instil great truths, with which it cannot easily co-exist, and by which the mind outgrows it. Men, who have recovered from false systems, will generally tell you, that the first step of their deliverance was the admission of some principle, which seemed not to menace their past opinions, but which prepared the mind for the entrance of another and another truth, until they were brought, almost without suspecting it, to look on almost every doctrine of religion with other eyes, and in another and more generous light. The old superstitions about ghosts and dreams were not ex-

pelled by argument, for hardly a book was written against them; but men gradually outgrew them; the spectres, which have haunted the terror-stricken soul for ages, fled before an improved philosophy, just as they were supposed to vanish before the rising sun. And in the same manner, the errors which disfigure Christianity, and from which no creed is free, are to yield to the growth of the human mind. Instead of spending his strength in tracking and refuting error, let the minister, who would serve the cause of truth, labour to gain and diffuse more and more enlarged and lofty views of our religion, of its nature, spirit, and end. Let him labour to separate what is of universal and everlasting application from the local and the temporary; to penetrate beneath the letter to the spirit; to detach the primary, essential, and all-comprehending principles of Christianity from the incrustations, accidental associations, and subordinate appendages by which they are often obscured; and to fix and establish them in men's minds, as the standards by which more partial views are to be tried. Let him especially set forth the *great moral* purpose of Christianity, always teaching, that Christ came to deliver from the power still more than from the punishment of sin; that his most important operation is *within* us; and that the highest of his missions, is the erection of God's throne in the soul, the inspiration of a fervent filial picty, a piety founded in confiding views of God's parental

character, and manifested in a charity corresponding to God's unbounded and ever active love. In addition to these efforts, let him strive to communicate the just principles of interpreting the Scriptures, that men, reading them more intelligently, may read them with new interest, and he will have discharged his chief duty in relation to controversy.

It is an interesting thought, that through the influences now described, a sensible progress is taking place in men's conceptions of Christianity. It is a plain matter of fact, that the hard features of that religious system, which has been "received by tradition from our fathers," are greatly softened; and that a necessity is felt by those who hold it, of accommodating their representations of it more and more, to the improved philosophy of the human mind, and to the undeniable principles of natural and revealed religion. Unconditional Election is seldom heard of among us. The Imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is hastening to join the exploded doctrine of Transubstantiation. The more revolting representations of man's state by nature are judiciously kept out of sight; and what is of still greater importance, preaching is incomparably more practical than formerly. And all these changes are owing, not to theological controversy, so much as to the general progress of the human mind. This progress is especially discernible in the diminished importance now ascribed to the outward parts of Christianity. Christians, having grown up to un-

derstand that their religion is a spirit and not a form, are beginning to feel the puerility as well as guilt of breaking Christ's followers into factions, on such questions as these, How much a Bishop differs from a Presbyter? and, How great a quantity of water should be used in baptism? And whilst they desire to ascertain the truth in these particulars, they look back on the uncharitable heat, with which these and similar topics were once discussed, with something of the wonder which they feel, on recollecting the violence of the papists during the memorable debate, whether the Virgin Mary were born with original sin? It is a consoling and delightful thought, that God, who uses Christianity to advance civilization and knowledge, makes use of this very advancement to bring back Christianity to a purer state, thus binding together and carrying forward by mutual action the cause of knowledge and the cause of religion, and strengthening perpetually their blended and blessed influences on human nature.

IV. The age is in many respects a *corrupt* one, and needs and demands in the ministry a spirit of reform. The age, I say, is corrupt; not because I consider it as falling below the purity of past times, but because it is obviously and grossly defective, when measured by the Christian standard and by the lights and advantages which it enjoys. I know nothing to justify the cry of modern degeneracy, but rather incline to the belief, that here at least

the sense of religion was never stronger than at present. In comparing different periods as to virtue and piety, regard must be had to difference of circumstances. It would argue little wisdom or candour, to expect the same freedom from luxury and dissipation in this opulent and flourishing community, as marked the first settlement of our country, when the inhabitants, scarcely sheltered from the elements, and almost wholly cut off from intercourse with the civilized world, could command little more than the necessaries of life; and yet it is through superficial comparisons in such particulars, that the past is often magnified at the expense of the present. I mean not to strike a balance between this age and former ones. I look on this age in the light of Christianity, as a minister ought to look upon it; and I see much to make a good man mourn, and to stir up Christ's servants to prayer and toil. That our increased comforts, improved arts, and overflowing prosperity, are often abused to licentiousness; that Christianity is with multitudes a mere name and form; that a practical atheism, which ascribes to nature and fortune the gifts and operations of God, and a practical infidelity, which lives and cares and provides only for the present state, abound on every side of us; that much, which is called morality, springs from a prudent balancing of the passions and a discreet regard to worldly interests; that there is an insensibility to God, which, if our own

hearts were not infected by it, would shock and amaze us; that education, instead of guarding and rearing the moral and religious nature, as its supreme care, often betrays and sacrifices it to accomplishments and acquisitions which apply only to the present life; that there is a mournful prevalence of dissoluteness among the young, and of intemperance among the poor; that the very religion of peace is made a torch of discord; and that the fires of uncharitableness and bigotry, fires kindled from hell, often burn on altars consecrated to the true God;—that such evils exist, who does not know? What Christian can look around him and say, that the state of society corresponds to what men may and should be, under the light of the Gospel, and in an age of advanced intelligence? As for that man, who, on surveying the world, thinks its condition almost as healthy as can be desired or hoped; who sees but a few superficial blots on the general aspect of society; who thinks the ministry established for no higher end, than to perpetuate the present state of morals and religion; whose heart is never burdened and sorrow-smitten by the fearful doom, to which multitudes around him are thoughtlessly hastening; oh, let not that man take on him the care of souls. The physician who should enter a hospital, to congratulate his dying patients on their pleasant sensations and rapid convalescence, would be as faithful to his trust, as the minister, who sees no deep moral maladies around

him. No man is fitted to withstand great evils with energy, unless he be impressed by their greatness. No man is fitted to enter upon that warfare with moral evil, to which the ministry is set apart, who is not pained and pierced by its extent and woes; who does not burn to witness and advance a great moral revolution in the world.

Am I told, that "romantic expectations of great changes in society will do more harm than good; that the world will move along in its present course, let the ministry do what it may; that we must take the present state as God has made it, and not waste our strength in useless lamentation for incurable evils." I hold this language, though it takes the name of philosophy, to be wholly unwarranted by experience and revelation. If there be one striking feature in human nature, it is its susceptibleness of improvement; and who is authorized to say, that the limit of Christian improvement is reached? that whilst science and art, intellect and imagination, are extending their domains, the conscience and affections, the moral and religious principles of our nature, are incapable of increased power and elevation? Have we not pledges in man's admiration of disinterested, heroic love; in his power of conceiving and thirsting for unattained heights of excellence; and in the splendour and sublimity of virtue already manifested in not a few who "shine as lights" in the darkness of past ages, that man was created for perpetual moral and religious progress.

True, the minister should not yield himself to romantic anticipations; for disappointment may deject him. Let him not expect to break in a moment chains of habit, which years have riveted, or to bring back to immediate intimacy with God souls which have wandered long and far from him. This is romance; but there is something to be dreaded by the minister more than this; I mean that frigid tameness of mind, too common in Christian teachers, which confounds the actual and the possible, which cannot burst the shackles of custom, which never kindles at the thoughts of great improvement of human nature, which is satisfied if religion receive an outward respect, and never dreams of enthroning it in men's souls; which looks on the strong holds of sin with despair, which utters by rote the solemn and magnificent language of the Gospel, without expecting it to "work mightily;" which sees in the ministry a part of the mechanism of society, a useful guardian of public order, but never suspects the powers with which it is armed by Christianity.

The ministry is indeed armed with great powers for great effects. The doctrines which Christianity commits to its teachers, are mighty engines. The perfect character of God; the tender and solemn attributes, which belong to him as our Father and Judge; his purposes of infinite and everlasting mercy towards the human race; the character and history of Christ; his entire, self-immolating devo-

tion to the cause of mankind; his intimate union with his followers; his sufferings and cross; his resurrection, ascension, and intercession; the promised aids of the Holy Spirit; the immortality of man; the retributions of a future state; the felicities and glories of heaven, and the punishments of hell;—here are truths, able to move the whole soul, and to war victoriously with its host of passions. The teacher to whom are committed the infinite realities of the spiritual world, the sanctions of eternity, "the powers of the life to come," has instruments to work with, which turn to feebleness all other means of influence. There is not heard on earth a voice so powerful, so penetrating, as that of an enlightened minister, who, under the absorbing influence of these mighty truths, devotes himself a living sacrifice, a whole burnt-offering, to the cause of enlightening and saving his fellow-creatures.

No; there is no romance in a minister's proposing, and hoping to forward, a great moral revolution on the earth; for, the religion which he is appointed to preach, was intended, and is adapted to work deeply and widely, and to change the face of society. Christianity was not ushered into the world with such a stupendous preparation; it was not foreshown through so many ages by enraptured prophets; it was not proclaimed so joyfully by the songs of angels; it was not preached by such holy lips and sealed by such precious blood, to be only a

pageant, a form, a sound, a show. Oh no! It has come from heaven with Heaven's life and power—come to "make all things new," to make "the wilderness glad, and the desert blossom as the rose," to break the stony heart, to set free the guilt-burdened and earth-bound spirit, and to "present faultless before God's glory with exceeding joy." With courage and hope becoming such a religion, let the minister bring to his work his concentrated powers of intellect and affection, and God, in whose cause he labours, will accompany and crown the labour with an almighty blessing.

I hasten to the usual addresses on this occasion.

To the Pastor elect:

You are now, my brother, to be set apart to the Christian ministry. I bid you welcome to its duties, and implore for you strength to discharge them, a long and prosperous course, increasing success and everlasting rewards. I also welcome you to the connection which is this day formed between you and myself. I thank God for an associate, in whose virtues and endowments I have the promise of personal comfort and relief, and still more the pledges of usefulness to this people. I have lived too long to expect unmingled good in this or in any relation of life; nor am I ignorant of the difficulties and trials, which are thought to attend the union of different minds and different hands in the care of the same church. God grant us that singleness of pur-

pose, that sincere concern for the salvation of our hearers, which will make the success of each the happiness of both. I know, for I have borne, the anxieties and sufferings which belong to the first years of the Christian ministry, and I beg you to avail yourself of whatever aid my experience can give you. But no human aid can lift every burden from your mind; nor would the truest kindness desire your exemption from the universal lot. May the discipline which awaits you, give purity and loftiness to your motives; give energy and tenderness to your character, and prepare you to minister to the wants of a tempted and afflicted world with that sympathy and wisdom, which a fellowship in suffering can alone bestow. May you grow in grace and in the spirit of the ministry, as you grow in years; and when the voice which now speaks to you shall cease to be heard within these walls, may you, my brother, be left to enjoy and reward the confidence, to point out the path and the perils, to fortify the virtues, to animate the piety, to comfort the sorrows, to save the souls of this much loved people.

Brethren of this Christian Society:

I rejoice in the proof, which this day affords, of your desire to secure the administration of Christ's word and ordinances to yourselves, and your children; and I congratulate you on the prospects which it opens before you. The recollections, which rush upon my mind, of your sympathy and uninterrupted

kindness through the vicissitudes of my health and the frequent suspension of my labours, encourage me to anticipate for my young brother that kindness and candour, on which the happiness of a minister so much depends. I cannot ask for him sincerer attachment, than it has been my lot to enjoy. I remember, however, that the reciprocation of kind feelings is not the highest end of the ministry; and accordingly my most earnest desire and prayer to God is, that with a new pastor he may send you new influences of his spirit, and that, through our joint labours, Christianity, being rooted in your understandings and hearts, may spring up into a rich harvest of universal goodness. May a more earnest concern for your salvation, and a thirst for more generous improvements, be excited in your breasts. May a new life breathe through the worship of this house, and a new love join the hearts of the worshippers. May our ministry produce everlasting fruits: and on that great day, which will summon the teacher and the taught before the judgement-seat of Christ, may *you*, my much loved and respected people, be "our joy and crown;" and may *we*, when all hearts shall be revealed, be seen, to have sought your good with unfeigned and disinterested love.

NOTE.

I HAVE spoken of the reproach thrown on Unitarian Christianity, as wanting power to awaken strong interest and zeal. This reproach may be traced to various causes. First, many Christians

make great mistakes as to the nature of true earnestness and zeal, supposing it to consist in animal excitements and ungoverned movements of the passions, and thus exposing it to the suspicion, if not the contempt, of reflecting men. Strange, that Christians, with their Master's history in their hands, should fall into this error; for who was ever more earnest, and at the same time who was ever calmer, than Jesus? Virtuous zeal begins in deep and strong convictions of the understanding, and issues in a strong, effectual purpose of duty; and mere sensibility, when disjoined from these, so far from being a Christian grace, partakes of the nature of vice.

Another cause of the reproach referred to is, that *party spirit* has been singularly busy in misrepresenting Unitarianism. The history of the church abounds in the excesses of party feeling; and by a kind of necessity, this bad passion, in every age, seeks some channel through which to pour itself forth, some object against which to discharge its bitterness and virulence; and this object now is Unitarianism. It is doubtful, whether the controversy between the papists and protestants, bitter and unrelenting as it was, will afford instances of more flagrant misrepresentation, than the professors of this doctrine are called to encounter. Truth is most wantonly sported with. Notwithstanding the well-known fact, that Unitarians have distinguished themselves by defending Christianity against infidels, they are charged with deism, and, still more, attempts are made to confound them with German writers, who not only reject Christianity, but question the existence of a God! It is comforting to reflect, that abuse is neutralized by excess, and that there is a natural sentiment of honour and justice in the human breast, which secures a re-action in favour of truth and rectitude, in proportion to the wrongs to which they have been exposed.

Another ground of the reproach referred to deserves particularly to be named. It is the habit of confounding Unitarianism with all the opinions which have been associated with it, and of making it responsible for all. The injustice of this would be seen and resented if a Trinitarian were charged with every opinion which has been at any time found in company with the doctrine of three persons in one God; and if every rash saying of every brother Trinitarian were to be laid at his door. But this is the common mode

of treating Unitarians. If one of their number happens to send abroad crude and extravagant notions, he is at once made the oracle and mouth of the whole body; whilst the affecting, solemn and impressive views of religion which form the mass of their writings are studiously kept out of sight.

By Unitarianism I understand the doctrine, that God is strictly One person, One conscious Agent; that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is alone and exclusively the Supreme and Independent God, and that Jesus Christ is a distinct, inferior, and dependent being. This doctrine may plainly be held in connection with a great diversity of opinions on other subjects, and I have known it joined even with the errors of Calvinism. Of course it may be expected to form sometimes part of a system, which as a whole, is very uninteresting; but there would be manifest injustice in setting down Unitarianism, as on this account wanting in power to move the soul.

In England, at the present day, the great Unitarian principle seems to be held in connections not very favourable to the excitement of a due fervour; and some of the causes are not obscure. The Unitarians of that country, through circumstances not necessary to be detailed, may be considered as forming a political as well as a religious party. Now it is apparent, from the history of religion in England, particularly from the history of Puritanism and the Established Church, that religion always suffers by being confounded with political feelings and struggles. But, leaving this delicate topic, I hasten to another still more delicate. The influence of distinguished individuals, so great on all classes of Christians, has not been favourable to a just zeal among Unitarians in England. Dr. Priestley should always be named with respect for his eminent endowments, and for his devotion to science and to the cause of Christianity; but the distinctive traits of his mind made him too receptive of the spirit of his times, which was a spirit of innovation, as well as of improvement. Distinguished more by rapidity than by profoundness of thought; inclined, perhaps by his attachment to physical science, to confound the provinces of matter and mind; constitutionally deficient in moral enthusiasm and deep feeling; and connected by political and literary sympathies with the revolutionists on the continent, whose hearts were frozen by an earth-born philosophy,

he was not particularly fitted to spread warmth and earnestness around him, or to exhibit Christianity in its most quickening form. He endeavoured to incorporate with Unitarianism the chilling doctrines of the Materialism of the Soul, of the mechanical necessity of human actions, and of the suspension of consciousness for ages after death, and adopted *philosophical* notions, as they have been falsely called, in regard to prayer, divine influence, &c. I think too, that his literary connections, his habits of physical research, and the spirit of the age, led him to believe, that Christianity would be made more credible by excluding from it *the supernatural* as much as possible; an opinion, which probably swayed not a little his views of his favourite doctrines, and which indeed is not uncommon among philosophers; though to me it seems not very rational; for reason rather teaches, that the supernatural cannot form an inconsiderable feature, but must occupy either a large space or none at all, in the divine administration. The result was, that he framed and propagated a system, in many respects open to the charge of being cold and uninteresting. But surely the great doctrine of "One God even the Father," or of the Supreme Divinity of the Father alone, is not to be identified with all the speculations of Dr. Priestley or of any other theologian. To me it seems to attract to itself naturally and powerfully all those doctrines of Christianity, which are most suited to touch, move, exalt, and sanctify the soul; and however mixed at present with imperfect views, it will, I doubt not, through the affinity which subsists between all the truths of God's word, unite with itself more and more whatever of genuine Christianity is scattered through the various denominations of Christians.

Had I time, I might enlarge on one more cause of the reproach thrown on Unitarianism, of being a cold, uninteresting doctrine, and a cause which implies error and blame in its professors. Unitarians, contending against *irrational* opinions, have been very anxious to maintain the character of rationality. Now, in religion as in common life, a distinction is often made between *reason* and the *imagination and affections*, as if they had separate provinces and must act apart; and the consequence is, that a system is apt to be thought rational in proportion as it is addressed to the naked intellect, and neglects the other parts of

our nature. This is a sad error. From the nature and purposes of religion, that system of faith is alone rational, which accords with man's whole nature, and especially with moral nature, with those high spiritual faculties and sensibilities which adapt and direct the mind to God, and to a nobler existence than the present. Accordingly, it may be said of men, in whom the intellect acts alone, or in whom it is disjoined in a great degree from imagination, taste, and refined moral sentiment, from the perception and feeling of the great, the good, and the lovely, that, although they claim for themselves peculiarly the character of rational, they are among the last to discover the *rational in religion.* The subject is too copious to be pursued further at present; but I could not abstain from this short notice of an error which I think has done injury to a glorious cause.

SERMON IV.

ON

THE DEDICATION

OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, NEW YORK,

DECEMBER 7, 1826.

"*And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments, is Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord.*

"*And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.*"—MARK xii. 29, 30.

WE have assembled to dedicate this building to the worship of the only living and true God, and to the teaching of the religion of his son, Jesus Christ. By this act we do not expect to confer on this spot of ground and these walls any peculiar sanctity or any mysterious properties. We do not suppose that, in consequence of rites now performed, the worship offered here will be more acceptable, than prayer uttered in the closet, or breathed from the soul in the midst of business; or that the instructions delivered from this pulpit will be more effectual, than if they were uttered in a

private dwelling or the open air. By dedication we understand only a solemn expression of the purpose for which this building is reared, joined with prayer to Him, who alone can crown our enterprise with success, that our design may be accepted and fulfilled. For this religious act we find, indeed, no precept in the New Testament, and on this account some have scrupled as to its propriety. But we are not among those who consider the written word as a statute book, by the letter of which every step in life must be governed. We believe, on the other hand, that one of the great excellencies of Christianity is, that it does not deal in minute regulation, but that, having given broad views of duty, and enjoined a pure and disinterested spirit, it leaves us to apply these rules and express this spirit, according to the promptings of the divine monitor within us, and according to the claims and exigencies of the ever varying conditions in which we are placed. We believe, too, that revelation is not intended to supersede God's other modes of instruction; that it is not intended to drown, but to make more audible the voice of nature. Now, nature dictates the propriety of such an act as we are this day assembled to perform. Nature has always taught men, on the completion of an important structure, designed for public and lasting good, to solemnize its first appropriation to the purpose for which it was reared, by some special service. To

us there is a sacredness in this moral instinct, in this law written on the heart; and in listening reverently to God's dictates, however conveyed, we doubt not that we shall enjoy his acceptance and blessing.

I have said, we dedicate this building to the teaching of the Gospel of Christ. But in the present state of the Christian church, these words are not as definite as they one day will be. This Gospel is variously interpreted. It is preached in various forms. Christendom is parcelled out into various sects. When, therefore, we see a new house of worship reared, the question immediately arises, to what mode of teaching Christianity is it to be devoted? I need not tell you, my hearers, that this house has been built by that class of Christians, who are called Unitarians, and that the Gospel will here be taught, as interpreted by that body of believers. This you all know; but perhaps all present have not attached a very precise meaning to the word, by which our particular views of Christianity are designated. Unitarianism has been made a term of so much reproach, and has been uttered in so many tones of alarm, horror, indignation, and scorn, that to many it gives only a vague impression of something monstrous, impious, unutterably perilous. To such, I would say, that this doctrine, which is considered by some, as the last and most perfect invention of Satan, the consummation of his blasphemies, the most cunning weapon ever

forged in the fires of hell, amounts to this—That there is One God, even the Father; and that Jesus Christ is not this one God, but his son and messenger, who derived all his powers and glories from the Universal Parent, and who came into the world, not to claim supreme homage for himself, but to carry up the soul to his Father, as the Only Divine Person, the only ultimate object of religious worship. To us this doctrine seems not to have steamed up from hell, but to have descended from the throne of God, and to invite and attract us thither. To us it seems to come from the Scriptures, with a voice loud as the sound of many waters, and as articulate and clear as if Jesus, in a bodily form, were pronouncing it distinctly in our ears. To this doctrine, and to Christianity interpreted in consistency with it, we dedicate this building.

That we desire to propagate this doctrine, we do not conceal. It is a treasure which we wish not to confine to ourselves, which we dare not lock up in our own breasts. We regard it as given to us for others as well as for ourselves. We should rejoice to spread it through this great city, to carry it into every dwelling, and to send it far and wide to the remotest settlements of our country. Am I asked, why we wish this diffusion? We dare not say, that we are in no degree influenced by sectarian feeling; for we see it raging around us, and we should be more than men, were we wholly to escape an epi-

demic passion. We do hope, however, that our main purpose and aim is not sectarian, but to promote a purer and nobler piety than now prevails. We are not induced to spread our opinions by the mere conviction that they are true; for there are many truths, historical, metaphysical, scientific, literary, which we have no anxiety to propagate. We regard them as the highest, most important, most efficient truths, and therefore demanding a firm testimony, and earnest efforts to make them known. In thus speaking, we do not mean, that we regard our peculiar views as essential to salvation. Far from us be this spirit of exclusion, the very spirit of antichrist, the worst of all the delusions of popery and of protestantism. We hold nothing to be essential, but the simple and supreme dedication of the mind, heart, and life to God and to his will. This inward and practical devotedness to the Supreme Being, we are assured, is attained and accepted under all the forms of Christianity. We believe, however, that it is favoured by that truth which we maintain, as by no other system of faith. We regard Unitarianism as peculiarly the friend of inward, living, practical religion. For this we value it. For this we would spread it; and we desire none to embrace it, but such as shall seek and derive from it this celestial influence.

This character and property of Unitarian Christianity, its fitness to promote true, deep and living piety, being our chief ground of attachment to it,

and our chief motive for dedicating this house to its inculcation, I have thought proper to make this the topic of my present discourse. I do not propose to prove the truth of Unitarianism by scriptural authorities, for this argument would exceed the limits of a sermon, but to show its superior tendency to form an elevated religious character. If, however, this position can be sustained, I shall have contributed no weak argument in support of the truth of our views; for the chief purpose of Christianity undoubtedly is, to promote piety, to bring us to God, to fill our souls with that great Being, to make us alive to him; and a religious system can carry no more authentic mark of a divine original, than its obvious, direct, and peculiar adaptation to quicken and raise the mind to its Creator.—In speaking thus of Unitarian Christianity as promoting *piety*, I ought to observe that I use this word in its proper and highest sense. I mean not every thing which bears the name of piety, for under this title superstition, fanaticism, and formality are walking abroad and claiming respect. I mean not an anxious frame of mind, not abject and slavish fear, not a dread of hell, not a repetition of forms, not church-going, not loud profession, not severe censures of others' irreligion; but filial love and reverence towards God, habitual gratitude, cheerful trust, ready obedience, and though last not least, an imitation of the ever active and unbounded benevolence of the Creator.

The object of this discourse requires me to speak with great freedom of different systems of religion. But let me not be misunderstood. Let not the uncharitableness, which I condemn, be lightly laid to my charge. Let it be remembered, that I speak only of systems, not of those who embrace them. In setting forth with all simplicity what seem to me the good or bad tendencies of doctrines, I have not a thought of giving standards or measures by which to estimate the virtue or vice of their professors. Nothing would be more unjust, than to decide on men's characters from their peculiarities of faith; and the reason is plain. Such peculiarities are not the only causes which impress and determine the mind. Our nature is exposed to innumerable other influences. If indeed a man were to know nothing but his creed, were to meet with no human beings but those who adopt it, were to see no example and to hear no conversation, but such as were formed by it; if his creed were to meet him every where, and to exclude every other object of thought; then his character might be expected to answer to it with great precision. But our Creator has not shut us up in so narrow a school. The mind is exposed to an infinite variety of influences, and these are multiplying with the progress of society. Education, friendship, neighbourhood, public opinion, the state of society, "the genius of the place" where we live, books, events, the pleasures and business of life, the outward creation, our physical temperament, and

innumerable other causes, are perpetually pouring in upon our souls, thoughts, views, and emotions; and these influences are so complicated, so peculiarly combined in the case of every individual, and so modified by the original susceptibilities and constitution of every mind, that on no subject is there greater uncertainty than on the formation of character. To determine the precise operation of a religious opinion amidst this host of influences surpasses human power. A great truth may be completely neutralized by the countless impressions and excitements, which the mind receives from other sources; and so a great error may be disarmed of much of its power, by the superior energy of other and better views, of early habits, and of virtuous examples. Nothing is more common than to see a doctrine believed without swaying the will. Its efficacy depends, not on the assent of the intellect, but on the place which it occupies in the thoughts, on the distinctness and vividness with which it is conceived, on its association with our common ideas, on its frequency of recurrence, and on its command of the attention, without which it has no life. Accordingly pernicious opinions are not seldom held by men of the most illustrious virtue. I mean not then, in commending or condemning systems, to pass sentence on their professors. I know the power of the mind to select from a multifarious system, for its habitual use, those features or principles which are generous, pure, and ennobling, and

by these to sustain its spiritual life amidst the nominal profession of many errors. I know that a creed is one thing, as written in a book, and another, as it exists in the minds of its advocates. In the book, all the doctrines appear in equally strong and legible lines. In the mind, many are faintly traced and seldom recurred to; whilst others are inscribed as with sunbeams, and are the chosen, constant lights of the soul. Hence, in good men of opposing denominations, a real agreement may subsist as to their vital principles of faith; and amidst the division of tongues, there may be unity of soul, and the same internal worship of God. By these remarks I do not mean, that error is not evil, or that it bears no pernicious fruit. Its tendencies are always bad. But I mean, that these tendencies exert themselves amidst so many counteracting influences; and that injurious opinions so often lie dead, through the want of mixture with the common thoughts, through the mind's not absorbing them, and changing them into its own substance; that the highest respect may, and ought to be cherished for men, in whose creed we find much to disapprove. In this discourse I shall speak freely, and some may say severely, of Trinitarianism; but I love and honour not a few of its advocates; and in opposing what I deem their errors, I would on no account detract from their worth. After these remarks, I hope that the language of earnest discussion and strong conviction will not be construed into the want of that charity,

which I acknowledge as the first grace of our religion.

I now proceed to illustrate and prove the superiority of Unitarian Christianity, as a means of promoting a deep and noble piety.

I. Unitarianism is a system most favourable to piety, because it presents to the mind *one, and one only, Infinite Person* to whom supreme homage is to be paid. It does not weaken the energy of religious sentiment by dividing it among various objects. It collects and concentrates the soul on One Father, of unbounded, undivided, unrivalled glory. To Him it teaches the mind to rise through all beings. Around him it gathers all the splendours of the universe. To Him it teaches us to ascribe whatever good we receive or behold, the beauty and magnificence of nature, the liberal gifts of providence, the capacities of the soul, the bonds of society, and especially the riches of grace and redemption, the mission, the power, and beneficent influences of Jesus Christ. All happiness it traces up to the Father, as the sole source; and the mind, which these views have penetrated, through this intimate association of every thing exciting and exalting in the universe with One Infinite Parent, can and does offer itself up to him with the intensest and profoundest love, of which human nature is susceptible. The Trinitarian indeed professes to believe in one God. But three persons, having distinctive qualities and relations, of whom one is sent and another the

sender, one is given and another the giver; of whom one intercedes and another hears the intercession, of whom one takes flesh, and another never becomes incarnate; three persons, thus discriminated, are as truly three objects to the mind, as if they were acknowledged to be separate divinities; and from the principles of our nature, they cannot act on the mind as deeply and powerfully as One Infinite Person, to whose sole goodness all happiness is ascribed. To multiply infinite objects for the heart, is to distract it. To scatter the attention among three equal persons, is to impair the power of each. The more strict and absolute the unity of God, the more easily and intimately all the impressions and emotions of piety flow together and are condensed into one glowing thought, one thrilling love. No language can express the absorbing energy of the thought of one Infinite Father. When vitally implanted in the soul, it grows and gains strength for ever. It enriches itself by every new view of God's word and works; gathers tribute from all regions and all ages; and attracts into itself all the rays of beauty, glory, and joy, in the material and spiritual creation.

My hearers, as you would feel the full influence of God upon your souls, guard sacredly, keep unobscured and unsullied, that fundamental and glorious truth, that there is One, and only one, Almighty Agent in the universe, One Infinite Father. Let this truth dwell in me in its uncorrupted simplicity, and I have the spring and nutriment of an ever

growing piety. I have an object for my mind towards which all things bear me. I know whither to go in all trials, whom to bless in all joy, whom to adore in all I behold. But let three persons claim from me supreme homage, and claim it on different grounds, one for sending, and another for coming to my relief, and I am divided, distracted, perplexed: My frail intellect is overborne. Instead of One Father, on whose arm I can rest, my mind is torn from object to object, and has reason to tremble lest among so many claimants of supreme love, it should withhold from one or another his due.

II. Unitarianism is the system most favourable to piety, because it holds forth and preserves inviolate the *spirituality of God.* "God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." It is of great importance to the progress and elevation of the religious principle, that we should *refine* more and more our conceptions of God; that we should separate from him all material properties, and whatever is limited or imperfect in our own nature; that we should regard him as a pure intelligence, an unmixed and infinite mind. When it pleased God to select the Jewish people and place them under miraculous interpositions, one of the first precepts given them was, that they should not represent God under any bodily form, any graven image, or the likeness of any creature. Next came Christianity, which had this as one of its great objects, to render religion still more spiritual,

by abolishing the ceremonial and outward worship of former times, and by discarding those grosser modes of describing God, through which the ancient prophets had sought to impress an unrefined people.

Now Unitarianism concurs with this sublime moral purpose of God. It asserts his spirituality. It approaches him under no bodily form, but as a pure spirit, as the infinite and universal mind. On the other hand, it is the direct influence of Trinitarianism to materialize men's conceptions of God; and in truth, this system is a relapse into the error of the rudest and earliest ages, into the worship of a corporeal God. Its leading feature is, the doctrine of a God clothed with a body, and acting and speaking through a material frame,—of the Infinite Divinity dying on a cross; a doctrine, which in earthliness reminds us of the mythology of the rudest pagans, and which a pious Jew, in the twilight of the Mosaic religion, would have shrunk from with horror. It seems to me no small objection to the Trinity, that it supposes God to take a body in the later and more improved ages of the world, when it is plain, that such a manifestation, if needed at all, was peculiarly required in the infancy of the race. The effect of such a system in debasing the idea of God, in associating with the Divinity human passions and infirmities, is too obvious to need much elucidation. On the supposition that the second person of the Trinity became incarnate, God may

be said to be a material being on the same general ground, on which this is affirmed of man; for man is material only by the union of mind with the body; and the very meaning of incarnation is, that God took a body through which he acted and spoke, as the human soul operates through its corporeal organs. Every bodily affection may be thus ascribed to God. Accordingly the Trinitarian in his most solemn act of adoration, is heard to pray in these appalling words; "Good Lord, deliver us; by the mystery of thy holy incarnation, by thy holy nativity and circumcision, by thy baptism, fasting and temptation, by thine agony and bloody sweat, by thy cross and passion, good Lord, deliver us." Now I ask you to judge from the principles of human nature, whether to worshippers who adore their God for his wounds and tears, his agony, and blood, and sweat, the ideas of corporeal existence and human suffering will not predominate over the conceptions of a purely spiritual essence; whether the mind, in clinging to the man, will not lose the God; whether a surer method for depressing and adulterating the pure thought of the Divinity could have been devised.

The Roman Catholics, true to human nature and their creed, have sought, by painting and statuary, to bring their imagined God before their eyes; and have thus obtained almost as vivid impressions of him, as if they had lived with him on the earth. The Protestant condemns them for using these simi-

litudes and representations in their worship; but if a Trinitarian, he does so to his own condemnation. For if, as he believes, it was once a duty to bow in adoration before the living body of his incarnate God, what possible guilt can there be in worshipping before the pictured or sculptured memorial of the same being? Christ's body may as truly be represented by the artist as any other human form; and its image may be used as effectually and properly as that of an ancient sage or hero to recall him with vividness to the mind.—It is said, that God has expressly forbidden the use of images in our worship. But why was that prohibition laid on the Jews? For this express reason, that God had not presented himself to them in any form, which admitted of representation. Hear the language of Moses, "Take good heed, lest ye make you a graven image, for ye saw *no manner of similitude* on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire *." If, since that period, God has taken a body, then the reason of the prohibition has ceased; and if he took a body, among other purposes, that he might assist the weakness of the intellect, which needs a material form, then a statue, which lends so great an aid to the conception of an absent friend, is not only justified, but seems to be required.

This materializing and embodying of the Supreme Being, which is the essence of Trinitarianism, can-

* Deut. iv. 15, 16. The arrangement of this text is a little changed, to put the reader immediately in possession of the meaning.

not but be adverse to a growing and exalted piety. Human and divine properties, being confounded in one being, lose their distinctness. The splendours of the Godhead are dimmed. The worshippers of an incarnate Deity, through the frailty of their nature, are strongly tempted to fasten chiefly on his human attributes; and their devotion, instead of rising to the infinite God, and taking the peculiar character which infinity inspires, becomes rather a human affection, borrowing much of its fervour from the ideas of suffering, blood, and death. It is indeed possible, that this God-man (to use the strange phraseology of the Trinitarians) may excite the mind more easily, than a purely spiritual divinity; just as a tragedy addressed to the eye and ear, will interest the multitude more than the contemplation of the most exalted character. But the emotions, which are most easily roused, are not the profoundest or most enduring. This human love, inspired by a human God, though at first more fervid, cannot grow and spread through the soul, like the reverential attachment, which an infinite, spiritual Father awakens. Refined conceptions of God, though more slowly attained, have a more quickening and all-pervading energy, and admit of perpetual accessions of brightness, life, and strength.

True, we shall be told, that Trinitarianism has converted only one of its three persons into a human deity, and that the other two remain purely spiritual beings. But who does not know, that man

will attach himself most strongly to the God who has become a man? Is not this even a duty, if the Divinity has taken a body to place himself within the reach of human comprehension and sympathy? That the Trinitarian's views of the Divinity will be coloured more by his visible, tangible, corporeal God, than by those persons of the Trinity, who remain comparatively hidden in their invisible and spiritual essence, is so accordant with the principles of our nature, as to need no laboured proof.

My friends, hold fast the doctrine of a purely spiritual Divinity. It is one of the great supports and instruments of a vital piety. It brings God near, as no other doctrine can. One of the leading purposes of Christianity, is to give us an ever growing sense of God's immediate presence, a consciousness of him in our souls. Now, just as far as corporeal or limited attributes enter into our conception of him, we remove him from us. He becomes an outward, distant being, instead of being viewed and felt as dwelling in the soul itself. It is an unspeakable benefit of the doctrine of a purely spiritual God, that he can be regarded as inhabiting, filling our spiritual nature; and through this union with our minds, he can and does become the object of an intimacy and friendship, such as no embodied being can call forth.

III. Unitarianism is the system most favourable to piety, because it presents a *distinct* and *intelligible* object of worship, a being, whose nature, whilst in-

expressibly sublime, is yet simple and suited to human apprehension. An infinite Father is the most exalted of all conceptions, and yet the least perplexing. It involves no incongruous ideas. It is illustrated by analogies from our own nature. It coincides with that fundamental law of intellect, through which we demand a cause proportioned to effects. It is also as interesting as it is rational; so that it is peculiarly congenial with the improved mind. The sublime simplicity of God, as he is taught in Unitarianism, by relieving the understanding from perplexity, and by placing him within the reach of thought and affection, gives him peculiar power over the soul. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a riddle. Men call it a mystery; but it is mysterious, not like the great truths of religion, by its vastness and grandeur, but by the irreconcileable ideas which it involves. One God, consisting of three persons or agents, is so strange a being, so unlike our own minds and all others with which we hold intercourse, is so misty, so incongruous, so contradictory, that he cannot be apprehended with that distinctness and that feeling of reality, which belong to the opposite system. Such a heterogeneous being, who is at the same moment one and many; who includes in his own nature the relations of Father and Son, or in other words, is Father and Son to himself; who, in one of his persons, is at the same moment the supreme God and a mortal man, omniscient and ignorant, almighty and im-

potent: such a being is certainly the most puzzling and distracting object ever presented to human thought. Trinitarianism, instead of teaching an intelligible God, offers to the mind a monstrous compound of hostile attributes, bearing plain marks of those ages of darkness, when Christianity shed but a faint ray, and the diseased fancy teemed with prodigies and unnatural creations. In contemplating a being, who presents such different and inconsistent aspects, the mind finds nothing to rest upon; and instead of receiving distinct and harmonious impressions, is disturbed by shifting, unsettled images. To commune with such a being must be as hard, as to converse with a man of three different countenances, speaking with three different tongues. The believer in this system must forget it, when he prays, or he could find no repose in devotion. Who can compare it in distinctness, reality and power, with the simple doctrine of One Infinite Father?

IV. Unitarianism promotes a fervent and enlightened piety, by asserting *the absolute and unbounded perfection of God's character*. This is the highest service which can be rendered to mankind. Just and generous conceptions of the Divinity are the soul's true wealth. To spread these, is to contribute more effectually, than by any other agency, to the progress and happiness of the intelligent creation. To obscure God's glory is to do greater wrong, than to blot out the sun. The character and influence of a religion must answer to the views which it gives

of the Divinity; and there is a plain tendency in that system, which manifests the divine perfections most resplendently, to awaken the sublimest and most blessed piety.

Now Trinitarianism has a fatal tendency to degrade the character of the Supreme Being. By multiplying divine persons, it takes from each the glory of independent, all-sufficient, absolute perfection. This may be shown in various particulars. And in the first place, the very idea that three persons in the Divinity are in any degree important, implies and involves the imperfection of each; for it is plain, that if one divine person possess all *possible* power, wisdom, love, and happiness, nothing will be gained to himself or to the creation by joining with him two, or two hundred other persons. To say that he needs others for any purpose, or in any degree, is to strip him of independent and all-sufficient majesty. If our Father in heaven, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is not of himself sufficient to all the wants of his creation; if by his union with other persons he can accomplish any good to which he is not of himself equal; or if he thus acquires a claim to the least degree of trust or hope, to which he is not of himself entitled by his own independent attributes: then it is plain, he is not a being of infinite and absolute perfection. Now Trinitarianism teaches, that the highest good accrues to the human race from the existence of three divine persons, sustaining different offices

and relations to the world; and it regards the Unitarian, as subverting the foundation of human hope, by asserting that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is alone and singly God. Thus it derogates from his infinite glory.

In the next place Trinitarianism degrades the character of the Supreme Being, by laying its disciples under the necessity of making such a distribution of offices and relations among the three persons, as will serve to designate and distinguish them; for in this way it interferes with the sublime conception of One Infinite Person, in whom all glories are concentred. If we are required to worship three persons, we must view them in different lights, or they will be mere repetitions of each other, mere names and sounds, presenting no objects, conveying no meaning to the mind. Some appropriate character, some peculiar acts, feelings, and relations must be ascribed to each. In other words, the glory of all must be shown, that some special distinguishing lustre may be thrown on each. Accordingly creation is associated peculiarly with the conception of the Father; satisfaction for human guilt with that of the Son; whilst sanctification, the noblest work of all, is given to the Holy Spirit as his more particular work. By a still more fatal distribution, the work of justice, the office of vindicating the rights of the Divinity, falls peculiarly to the Father; whilst the loveliness of interposing mercy clothes peculiarly the person of the Son. By this

unhappy influence of Trinitarianism, from which common minds at least cannot escape, the splendours of the Godhead, being scattered among three objects, instead of being united in One Infinite Father, are dimmed; and he whose mind is thoroughly and practically possessed by this system, can hardly conceive the effulgence of glory in which the One God offers himself to a pious believer in his strict unity.

But the worst has not been told. I observe then, in the third place, that if Three Divine Persons are believed in, such an administration or government of the world must be ascribed to them, as will furnish them with a sphere of operation. No man will admit three persons into his creed without finding a use for them. Now it is an obvious remark, that a system of the universe, which involves and demands more than One Infinite Agent, must be wild, extravagant, and unworthy the perfect God; because there is no possible or conceivable good, to which such an agent is not adequate. Accordingly, we find Trinitarianism connecting itself with a scheme of administration, exceedingly derogatory to the divine character. It teaches, that the Infinite Father saw fit to put into the hands of our first parents the character and condition of their whole progeny; and that, through one act of disobedience, the whole race bring with them into being a corrupt nature, or are born depraved. It teaches, that the offences of a short life, though begun and spent

under this disastrous influence, merit endless punishment, and that God's laws threaten this infinite penalty; and that man is thus burdened with a guilt, which no sufferings of the created universe can expiate, which nothing but the suffering of an Infinite Being can purge away. In this condition of human nature, Trinitarianism finds a sphere of action for its different persons. I am aware that some Trinitarians, on hearing this statement of their system, may reproach me with ascribing to them the errors of Calvinism, a system which they abhor as much as ourselves. But none of the peculiarities of Calvinism enter into this exposition; I have given what I understand to be the leading features of Trinitarianism all the world over; and the benevolent professors of that faith, who recoil from this statement, must blame not the preacher, but the creeds and establishments by which these doctrines are diffused. For ourselves, we look with horror and grief on the views of God's government, which are naturally and intimately united with Trinitarianism. They take from us our Father in heaven, and substitute a stern and unjust lord. Our filial love and reverence rise up against them. We say to the Trinitarian, touch any thing but the perfections of God. Cast no stain on that spotless purity and loveliness. We can endure any errors but those, which subvert or unsettle the convictions of God's paternal goodness. Urge not upon us a system, which makes existence a curse, and wraps

the universe in gloom. Leave us the cheerful light, the free and healthful atmosphere, of a liberal and rational faith; the ennobling and consoling influences of the doctrine, which nature and revelation in blessed concord teach us, of One Father of unbounded and inexhaustible love.

V. Unitarianism is peculiarly favourable to piety, because it *accords with nature*, with the world around and the world within us; and through this accordance it gives aid to nature, and receives aid from it, in impressing the mind with God. We live in the midst of a glorious universe, which was meant to be a witness and preacher of the Divinity; and a revelation from God may be expected to be in harmony with this system, and to carry on a common ministry with it in lifting the soul to God. Now Unitarianism is in accordance with nature. It teaches One Father, and so does creation, the more it is explored. Philosophy, in proportion as it extends its views of the universe, sees in it, more and more, a sublime and beautiful unity, and multiplied proofs, that all things have sprung from one intelligence, one power, one love. The whole outward creation proclaims to the Unitarian the truth in which he delights. So does his own soul. But neither nature nor the soul bears one trace of three divine persons. Nature is no Trinitarian. It gives not a hint, not a glimpse of a tri-personal author. Trinitarianism is a confined system, shut up in a few texts, a few written lines, where many of the

wisest minds have failed to discover it. It is not inscribed on the heavens and the earth, not borne on every wind, not resounding and re-echoing through the universe. The sun and stars say nothing of a God of three persons. They all speak of the One Father whom we adore. To *our* ears one and the same voice comes from God's word and works, a full and swelling strain, growing clearer, louder, more thrilling as we listen, and with one blessed influence lifting up our souls to the Almighty Father.

This accordance between nature and revelation increases the power of both over the mind. Concurring as they do in one impression, they make that impression deeper. To men of reflection, the conviction of the reality of religion is exceedingly heightened, by a perception of harmony in the views of it which they derive from various sources. Revelation is never received with so intimate a persuasion of its truth, as when it is seen to conspire to the same ends and impression for which all other things are made. It is no small objection to Trinitarianism, that it is an insulated doctrine, that it reveals a God whom we meet no where in the universe. Three divine persons, I repeat it, are found only in a few texts, and those so dark, that the gifted minds of Milton, Newton, and Locke, could not find them there. Nature gives them not a whisper of evidence. And can they be as real and powerful to the mind, as that One Father, whom

the general strain and common voice of nature calls us to adore?

VI. Unitarianism favours piety *by opening the mind to new and ever enlarging views of God.* Teaching, as it does, the same God with nature, it leads us to seek him in nature. It does not shut us up in the written word, precious as that manifestation of the Divinity is. It considers revelation, not as independent on his other means of instruction; not as a separate agent; but as a part of the great system of God for enlightening and elevating the human soul; as intimately joined with creation and providence, and intended to concur with them; and as given to assist us in reading the volume of the universe. Thus Unitarianism, where its genuine influence is experienced, tends to enrich and fertilize the mind; opens it to new lights, wherever they spring up; and by combining, makes more efficient, the means of religious knowledge. Trinitarianism, on the other hand, is a system which tends to confine the mind; to shut it up in what is written; to diminish its interest in the universe; and to disincline it to bright and enlarged views of God's works. This effect will be explained, in the first place, if we consider, that the peculiarities of Trinitarianism differ so much from the teachings of the universe, that he, who attaches himself to the one, will be in danger of losing his interest in the other. The ideas of Three Divine Persons, of God clothing himself in flesh, of the infinite Creator

saving the guilty by transferring their punishment to an innocent being,—these ideas cannot easily be made to coalesce in the mind with that which nature gives, of One Almighty Father and Unbounded Spirit, whom no worlds can contain, and whose vicegerent in the human breast pronounces it a crime to lay the penalties of vice on the pure and unoffending.

But Trinitarianism has a still more positive influence in shutting the mind against improving views from the universe. It tends to throw gloom over God's works. Imagining that Christ is to be exalted, by giving him an exclusive agency in enlightening and recovering mankind, it is tempted to disparage other lights and influences; and for the purpose of magnifying his salvation, it inclines to exaggerate the darkness and desperateness of man's present condition. The mind, thus impressed, naturally leans to those views of nature and of society, which will strengthen the ideas of desolation and guilt. It is tempted to aggravate the miseries of life, and to see in them only the marks of divine displeasure and punishing justice; and overlooks their obvious fitness and design to awaken our powers, exercise our virtues, and strengthen our social ties. In like manner it exaggerates the sins of men, that the need of an infinite atonement may be maintained. Some of the most affecting tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the

soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy with disinterested and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for a happiness not found on earth,—these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the newborn child are gravely urged, as indications of a native rooted corruption; its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and inexpressible joy, its loveliness and beauty, are not listened to, though they plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. The sacred and tender affections of home; the unwearied watchings and cheerful sacrifices of parents; the reverential, graceful assiduity of children smoothing an aged father's or mother's descent to the grave; woman's love, stronger than death; the friendship of brothers and sisters; the anxious affection, which tends around the bed of sickness; the subdued voice, which breathes comfort into the mourner's heart; all the endearing offices, which shed a serene light through our dwellings;—these are explained away by the thorough advocates of this system, so as to include no real virtue, so as to consist with a natural aversion to goodness. Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence, and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called "the true faith,"

are, by the most rigid disciples of the doctrine which I oppose, resolved into the passion for distinction, or some other working of "unsanctified nature." Thus Trinitarianism and its kindred doctrines have a tendency to veil God's goodness, to sully his fairest works, to dim the lustre of those innocent and pure affections, which a divine breath kindles in the soul; to blight the beauty and freshness of creation; and in this way to consume the very nutriment of piety. We know, and rejoice to know, that in multitudes this tendency is counteracted by a cheerful temperament, a benevolent nature, and a strength of gratitude, which burst the shackles of a melancholy system. But from the nature of the doctrine, the tendency exists and is strong; and an impartial observer will often discern it resulting in gloomy, depressing views of life and the universe.

Trinitarianism, by thus tending to exclude bright and enlarging views of the creation, seems to me not only to chill the heart, but to injure the understanding. It does not send the mind far and wide for new and elevating objects; and we have here one explanation of the barrenness and feebleness by which theological writings are so generally marked. It is not wonderful, that the prevalent theology should want vitality and enlargement of thought, for it does not accord with the perfections of God and the spirit of the universe. It has not its root in eternal truth; but is a narrow, technical, artificial system, the fabrication of unrefined ages, and

consequently incapable of being blended with the new lights which are spreading over the most interesting subjects, and of being incorporated with the results and anticipations of original and progressive minds. It stands apart in the mind, instead of seizing upon new truths, and converting them into its own nutriment. With few exceptions, the Trinitarian theology of the present day is greatly deficient in freshness of thought, and in power to awaken the interest and to meet the intellectual and spiritual wants of thinking men. I see indeed superior minds, and great minds, among the adherents of the prevalent system; but they seem to me to move in chains, and to fulfil poorly their high function of adding to the wealth of the human intellect. In theological discussion, they remind me more of Samson grinding in the narrow mill of the Philistines, than of that undaunted champion achieving victory for God's people, and enlarging the bounds of their inheritance. Now, a system which has a tendency to confine the mind, and to impair its sensibility to the manifestations of God in the universe, is so far unfriendly to piety, to a bright, joyous, hopeful, ever growing love of the Creator. It tends to nourish a religion of a low, dull, melancholy tone, such, I apprehend, as now predominates in the Christian world.

VII. Unitarianism promotes piety *by the high place which it assigns to piety in the character and work of Jesus Christ.* What is it, which the Uni-

tarian regards as the chief glory of the character of Christ? I answer, his filial devotion, the entireness with which he surrendered himself to the will and benevolent purposes of God. The piety of Jesus, which, on the supposition of his Supreme Divinity, is a subordinate and incongruous, is, to us, his prominent and crowning attribute. We place his "oneness with God," not in an unintelligible unity of essence, but in unity of mind and heart, in the strength of his love through which he renounced every separate interest, and identified himself with his Father's designs. In other words, filial piety, the consecration of his whole being to the benevolent will of his Father, this is the mild glory in which he always offers himself to our minds; and of consequence, all our sympathies with him, all our love and veneration toward him, are so many forms of delight in a pious character, and our whole knowledge of him incites us to a like surrender of our whole nature and existence to God.

In the next place, Unitarianism teaches, that the highest work or office of Christ is to call forth and strengthen piety in the human breast, and thus it sets before us this character as the chief acquisition and end of our being. To us, the great glory of Christ's mission consists in the power, with which "he reveals the Father," and establishes the "kingdom or reign of God" within the soul. By the crown, which he wears, we understand the eminence which

he enjoys in the most beneficent work in the universe, that of bringing back the lost mind to the knowledge, love, and likeness of its Creator. With these views of Christ's office, nothing can seem to us so important as an enlightened and profound piety, and we are quickened to seek it as the perfection and happiness, to which nature and redemption jointly summon us.

Now we maintain, that Trinitarianism obscures and weakens these views of Christ's character and work; and this it does, by insisting perpetually on others of an incongruous, discordant nature. It diminishes the power of his piety. Making him, as it does, the Supreme Being, and placing him as an equal on his Father's throne, it turns the mind from him as the meekest worshipper of God; throws into the shade, as of very inferior worth, his self-denying obedience; and gives us other grounds for revering him, than his entire homage, his fervent love, his cheerful self-sacrifice to the Universal Parent. There is a plain incongruity in the belief of his Supreme Godhead with the ideas of filial piety and exemplary devotion. The mind, which has been taught to regard him as of equal majesty and authority with the Father, cannot easily feel the power of his character as the affectionate son, whose meat it was to do his father's will. The mind accustomed to make him the Ultimate Object of Worship, cannot easily recognise in him the pattern of that worship, the guide to the Most High. The characters are

incongruous, and their union perplexing, so that neither exerts its full energy on the mind.

Trinitarianism also exhibits the work, as well as character of Christ, in lights less favourable to piety. It does not make the promotion of piety his chief end. It teaches, that the highest purpose of his mission was to reconcile God to man, not man to God. It teaches, that the most formidable obstacle to human happiness lies in the claims and threatenings of divine justice. Hence it leads men to prize Christ more, for satisfying this justice, and appeasing God's anger, than for awakening in the human soul sentiments of love towards its Father in heaven. Accordingly, multitudes seem to prize pardon more than piety, and think it a greater boon to escape, through Christ's sufferings, the fire of hell, than to receive through his influence the spirit of heaven, the spirit of devotion. Is such a system propitious to a generous and ever-growing piety?

If I may be allowed a short digression, I would conclude this head with the general observation, that we deem our views of Jesus Christ more interesting than those of Trinitarianism. We feel that we should lose much, by exchanging the distinct character and mild radiance, with which he offers himself to our minds, for the confused and irreconcileable glories with which that system labours to invest him. According to Unitarianism, he is a being who may be understood, for he is one mind, one conscious nature. According to the opposite faith, he

is an inconceivable compound of two most dissimilar minds, joining in one person a finite and infinite nature, a soul weak and ignorant, and a soul almighty and omniscient. And is such a being a proper object for human thought and affection?—I add as another important consideration, that to us, Jesus, instead of being the second of three obscure unintelligible persons, is *first* and pre-eminent, in the sphere in which he acts, and is thus the object of a distinct attachment, which he shares with no equals or rivals. To us, he is first of the sons of God, the son by peculiar nearness and likeness to the Father. He is first of all the ministers of God's mercy and beneficence, and through him the largest stream of bounty flows to the creation. He is first in God's favour and love, the most accepted of worshippers, the most prevalent of intercessors. In this mighty universe, framed to be a mirror of its author, we turn to Jesus as the brightest image of God, and gratefully yield him a place in our souls, second only to the infinite Father, to whom he himself directs our supreme affection.

VIII. I now proceed to a great topic. Unitarianism promotes piety, *by meeting the wants of man as a sinner*. The wants of the sinner may be expressed almost in one word. He wants assurances of mercy in his Creator. He wants pledges that God is love in its purest form, that is, that he has a goodness so disinterested, free, full, strong, and immutable, that the ingratitude and disobedience of his crea-

tures cannot overcome it. This unconquerable love, which in Scripture is denominated grace, and which waits not for merit to call it forth, but flows out to the most guilty, is the sinner's only hope, and is fitted to call forth the most devoted gratitude. Now this grace or mercy of God, which seeks the lost, and receives and blesses the returning child, is proclaimed by that faith, which we advocate, with a clearness and energy, which cannot be surpassed. Unitarianism will not listen for a moment to the common errors, by which this bright attribute is obscured. It will not hear of a vindictive wrath in God, which must be quenched by blood; or of a justice, which binds his mercy with an iron chain, until its demands are satisfied to the full. It will not hear that God needs any foreign influence to awaken his mercy; but teaches, that the yearnings of the tenderest human parent towards a lost child, are but a faint image of God's deep and overflowing compassion toward erring man. This essential and unchangeable propensity of the divine mind to forgiveness, the Unitarian beholds shining forth through the whole word of God, and especially in the mission and revelation of Jesus Christ, who lived and died to make manifest the inexhaustible plenitude of divine grace; and, aided by revelation, he sees this attribute of God every where, both around him and within him. He sees it in the sun which shines, and the rain which descends, on the evil and unthankful; in the peace, which returns to the mind

in proportion to its return to God and duty; in the sentiment of compassion, which springs up spontaneously in the human breast towards the fallen and lost; and in the moral instinct, which teaches us to cherish this compassion as a sacred principle, as an emanation of God's infinite love. In truth, Unitarianism asserts so strongly the mercy of God, that the reproach thrown upon it is, that it takes from the sinner the dread of punishment; a reproach wholly without foundation; for our system teaches, that God's mercy is not an instinctive tenderness, which cannot inflict pain; but an all-wise love, which desires the true and lasting good of its object, and consequently desires first for the sinner that restoration to purity, without which, shame, and suffering, and exile from God and heaven are of necessity and unalterably his doom. Thus Unitarianism holds forth God's grace and forgiving goodness most resplendently; and by this manifestation of him, it tends to awaken a tender and confiding piety; an ingenuous love, which mourns that it has offended; an ingenuous aversion to sin, not because sin brings punishment, but because it separates the mind from this merciful Father.

Now we object to Trinitarianism, that it obscures, if it does not annul, the mercy of God. It does so in various ways. We have already seen, that it gives such views of God's government, that we can hardly conceive of this attribute as entering into his character. Mercy to the sinner is the principle of

love or benevolence in its highest form; and surely this cannot be expected from a being who brings us into existence burdened with hereditary guilt, and who threatens with endless punishment and woe the heirs of so frail and feeble a nature. With such a Creator, the idea of mercy cannot coalesce; and I will say more, that under such a government man has no need of mercy; for he owes no allegiance to such a Maker, and cannot of course contract the guilt of violating it; and without guilt he needs no grace or pardon. The severity of this system places him on the ground of an injured being. The wrong lies on the side of the Creator.

In the next place, Trinitarianism obscures God's mercy, by the manner in which it supposes pardon to be communicated. It teaches that God remits the punishment of the offender, in consequence of receiving an equivalent from an innocent person; that the sufferings of the sinner are removed by a full satisfaction made to divine justice in the sufferings of a substitute. And is this "the quality of mercy?" What means forgiveness, but the reception of the returning child through the strength of parental love? This doctrine invests the Saviour with a claim of *merit*, with a *right* to the remission of the sins of his followers; and represents God's reception of the penitent as a recompense due to the worth of his son. And his mercy, which means free and undeserved love, made more manifest, more resplendent, by the introduction of merit and right as the

ground of our salvation! Could a surer expedient be invented for obscuring its freeness, and for turning the sinner's gratitude from the sovereign who demands, to the sufferer who offers, full satisfaction for his guilt?

I know it is said, that Trinitarianism magnifies God's mercy, because it teaches, that he himself provided the substitute for the guilty. But I reply, that the work here ascribed to mercy is not the most appropriate, nor most fitted to manifest it and impress it on the heart. This may be made apparent by familiar illustrations. Suppose that a creditor through compassion to certain debtors, should persuade a benevolent and opulent man, to pay him in their stead. Would not the debtors see a greater mercy, and feel a weightier obligation, if they were to receive a free gratuitous release? And will not their chief gratitude stray beyond the creditor to the benevolent substitute? Or suppose that a parent, unwilling to inflict a penalty on a disobedient but feeble child, should persuade a stronger child to bear it. Would not the offender see a more touching mercy in a free forgiveness, springing immediately from a parent's heart, than in this circuitous remission? and will he not be tempted to turn with his strongest love to the generous sufferer? In this process of substitution, of which Trinitarianism boasts so loudly, the mercy of God becomes complicated with the rights and merits of the substitutes, and is a more distant cause than these in our

salvation. These are nearer, more visible, and more than divide the glory with grace and mercy in our rescue. They turn the mind from mercy as the *only* spring of its happiness, and only rock of its hope. Now this is to deprive piety of one of its chief means of growth and joy. Nothing should stand between the soul and God's mercy. Nothing should share with mercy the work of our salvation. Christ's intercession should ever be regarded as an application to love and mercy, not as a demand of justice, not as a claim of merit. I grieve to say, that Christ, as now viewed by multitudes, hides the lustre of that very attribute, which it is his great purpose to display. I fear, that to many, Jesus wears the glory of a more winning, tender mercy, than his Father; and that he is regarded as the sinner's chief resource. Is this the way to invigorate piety?

Trinitarians imagine, that there is one view of their system, peculiarly fitted to give peace and hope to the sinner, and consequently to promote gratitude and love. It is this. They say, it provides an *Infinite* substitute for the sinner, than which nothing can give greater relief to the burdened conscience. Jesus, being the second person of the Trinity, was able to make infinite satisfaction for sin; and what, they ask, in Unitarianism, can compare with this? I have time only for two brief replies. And first, this doctrine of an Infinite satisfaction, or as it is improperly called, of an Infinite atonement, subverts, instead of building up, hope,

because it argues infinite severity in the government which requires it. Did I believe, what Trinitarianism teaches, that not the least transgression, not even the first sin of the dawning mind of the child, could be remitted without an infinite expiation; I should feel myself living under a legislation unspeakably dreadful, under laws written like Draco's in blood; and instead of thanking the sovereign for providing an infinite substitute, I should shudder at the attributes, which render this expedient necessary. It is commonly said, that an infinite atonement is needed to make due and deep impressions of the evil of sin. But he, who framed all souls and gave them their susceptibilities, ought not to be thought so wanting in goodness and wisdom, as to have constituted a universe, which demands so dreadful and degrading a method of enforcing obedience, as the penal sufferings of a God. This doctrine of an Infinite substitute, suffering the penalty of sin, to manifest God's wrath against sin, and thus to support his government, is, I fear, so familiar to us all, that its monstrous character is overlooked. Let me then set it before you, in new terms, and by a new illustration; and if in so doing I may wound the feelings of some who hear me, I beg them to believe that I do it with pain, and from no impulse but a desire to serve the cause of truth.—Suppose then, that a teacher should come among you, and should tell you, that the Creator, in order to pardon his own children, had erected a gallows in the centre of the

universe, and had publicly executed upon it, in room of the offenders, an Infinite Being, the partaker of his own Supreme Divinity; suppose him to declare, that this execution was appointed, as a most conspicuous and terrible manifestation of God's justice and wrath, and of the infinite woe denounced by his law; and suppose him to add, that all beings in heaven and earth are required to fix their eyes on this fearful sight, as the most powerful enforcement of obedience and virtue:—Would you not tell him, that he calumniated his Maker? Would you not say to him, that this central gallows threw gloom over the universe; that the spirit of a government, whose very acts of pardon were written in such blood, was terror, not paternal love; and that the obedience, which needed to be upheld by this horrid spectacle, was nothing worth? Would you not say to him, that even you, in this infancy and imperfection of your being, were capable of being wrought upon by nobler motives, and of hating sin through more generous views; and that much more the angels, those pure flames of love, need not the gallows and an executed God to confirm their loyalty? You would all so feel at such teaching as I have supposed; and yet how does this differ from the popular doctrine of atonement? According to this doctrine, we have an Infinite Being sentenced to suffer as a substitute the death of the cross, a punishment more ignominious and agonizing than the gallows, a punishment reserved for slaves and

the vilest malefactors; and he suffers this punishment, that he may show forth the terrors of God's law, and strike a dread of sin through the universe.—I am indeed aware that multitudes, who profess this doctrine, are not accustomed to bring it to their minds distinctly in this light; that they do not ordinarily regard the death of Christ, as a criminal execution, as an infinitely dreadful infliction of justice, as intended to show, that, without an infinite satisfaction, they must hope nothing from God. Their minds turn by a generous instinct from these appalling views, to the love, the disinterestedness, the moral grandeur and beauty of the sufferer; and through such thoughts they make the cross a source of peace, gratitude, love and hope; thus affording a delightful exemplification of the power of the human mind to attach itself to what is good and purifying in the most irrational system. But let none on this account, say, that we misrepresent the doctrine of atonement, the primary and essential idea of which is, *the public execution of a God*, for the purpose of satisfying justice and awakening a shuddering dread of sin.

I have a second objection to this doctrine of Infinite atonement. When examined minutely, and free from ambiguous language, it vanishes into air. It is wholly delusion. The Trinitarian tells me, that, according to his system, we have an infinite substitute; that the Infinite God was pleased to bear our punishment, and consequently that pardon

is made sure. But I ask him, do I understand you? Do you mean that the Great God, who never changes, whose happiness is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that this Eternal Being, really bore the penalty of my sins, *really suffered and died?* Every pious man, when pressed by this question, answers, No. What then does the doctrine of Infinite atonement mean? Why, this; that God took into union with himself our nature, that is a human body and soul; and *these* bore the suffering for our sins; and, through his union with these, God *may be said* to have borne it himself.—Thus this vaunted system goes out—in words. The Infinite victim proves to be a frail man, and God's share in the sacrifice is a mere fiction. I ask with solemnity, can this doctrine give one moment's ease to the conscience of an unbiassed, thinking man? Does it not unsettle all hope, by making the whole religion suspicious and unsure? I am compelled to say, that I see in it no impression of majes[illegible] wisdom, or love, nothing worthy of a Go[illegible]nt when I compare it with that nobler faith, which directs our eyes and heart to God's essential mercy, as our only hope, I am amazed that any should ascribe to it superior efficacy, as a religion for sinners, as a means of filling the soul with pious trust and love. I know, indeed, that some will say, that, in giving up an Infinite atonement, I deprive myself of all hope of divine favour. To such, I would say, You do infinite wrong to God's mercy. On that

mercy I cast myself without a fear. I indeed desire Christ to intercede for me. I regard his relation to me as God's kindest appointment. Through him, "grace and truth come" to me from Heaven, and I look forward to his friendship, as among the highest blessings of my whole future being. But I cannot, and dare not ask him, to offer an infinite satisfaction for my sins; to appease the wrath of God; to reconcile the Universal Father to his own offspring; to open to me those arms of Divine Mercy, which have encircled and borne me from the first moment of my being. The essential and unbounded mercy of my Creator, is the foundation of my hope; and a broader and surer the universe cannot give me.*

IX. I now proceed to the last consideration, which the limits of this discourse will permit me to urge. It has been more than once suggested, but deserves to be distinctly stated. I observe, then, that Unitarianism promotes piety, because it is a *rational religion.* By this, I do not mean, that its

* Under this head, I have more than once used the word *atonement* in the sense in which Trinitarians generally use it; and without doing so, my object might not have been sufficiently clear to some of my readers. I ought to say, however, that I do not consider this sense as the true one, or as agreeing with the meaning which belongs to the term in the Scriptures; and I always lament the necessity of using a scriptural word in a manner, which may countenance a misapprehension of its real import. This subject of atonement needs a much more extensive discussion, than the limits and design of this sermon would allow. I have a strong impression, that the prevalent views of it may

truths can be fully comprehended; for there is not an object in nature or religion, which has not innumerable connections and relations beyond our grasp of thought. I mean, that its doctrines are consistent with one another, and with all established truth. Unitarianism is in harmony with the great and clear principles of revelation; with the laws and power of human nature; with the dictates of the moral sense; with the noblest instincts and highest aspirations of the soul; and with the lights, which the universe throws on the character of its author. We can hold this doctrine without self-contradiction, without rebelling against our rational and moral powers, without putting to silence the divine monitor in the breast. And this is an unspeakable benefit; for a religion, thus coincident with reason, conscience, and our whole spiritual being, has the foundation of universal empire in the breast; and the heart finding no resistance in the intellect, yields itself wholly, cheerfully,

easily be shown to be false, though the true views of it may not so easily be established. I believe, too, that time will prove, that thinking men of opposite sects differ less on this point than is imagined. It will be observed, that I have not undertaken to state the way or method by which Christ's sufferings contribute to human salvation. On this point there is a diversity of opinion. I have thought it sufficient to state the general principle in which Unitarian Christians agree. They all believe, that God's love or mercy is "the beginning and the end" of human salvation, and that this gives to Christ's sufferings and intercession their efficacy.

without doubts or misgivings, to the love of its Creator.

To Trinitarianism we object, what has always been objected to it, that it contradicts and degrades reason, and thus exposes the mind to the worst delusions. Some of its advocates, more courageous than prudent, have even recommended "the prostration of the understanding" as preparatory to its reception. Its chief doctrine is an outrage on our rational nature. Its three persons, who constitute its God, must either be frittered away into three unmeaning distinctions, into sounds signifying nothing; or they are three conscious agents, who cannot, by any human art or metaphysical device, be made to coalesce into one being; who cannot be really viewed as one mind, having one consciousness and one will. Now a religious system, the cardinal principle of which offends the understanding, very naturally conforms itself throughout to this prominent feature, and becomes prevalently irrational. He, who is compelled to defend his faith in any particular by the plea, that human reason is so depraved through the fall, as to be an inadequate judge of religion, and that God is honoured by our reception of what shocks the intellect,—seems to have no defence left against accumulated absurdities. According to these principles, the fanatic, who exclaimed, "I believe, because it is impossible," had a fair title to canonization. Reason is too Godlike a faculty, to be insulted with impunity. Accordingly Trinitarianism, as we

have seen, links itself with several degrading errors; and its most natural alliance is with Calvinism, that cruel faith, which, stripping God of mercy and man of power, has made Christianity an instrument of torture to the timid, and an object of doubt or scorn to hardier spirits. I repeat it, a doctrine, which violates reason, like the Trinity, prepares its advocates, in proportion as it is incorporated into the mind, for worse and worse delusions. It breaks down the distinctions and barriers between truth and falsehood. It creates a diseased taste for prodigies, fictions, and exaggerations, for startling mysteries, and wild dreams of enthusiasm. It destroys the relish for the simple, chaste, serene beauties of truth. Especially when the prostration of the understanding is taught as an act of piety, we cannot wonder, that the grossest superstition should be devoured, and that the credulity of the multitude should keep pace with the forgeries of imposture and fanaticism. The history of the church is the best comment on the effects of divorcing reason from religion; and if the present age is disburdened of many of the superstitions, under which Christianity and human nature groaned for ages, it owes its relief in no small degree to the reinstating of reason in her long violated rights.

The injury of religion, from irrational doctrines when thoroughly believed, is immense. The human soul has a unity. Its various faculties are adapted to one another. One life pervades it; and its beauty,

strength, and growth, depend on nothing so much, as on the harmony and joint action of all its principles. To wound and degrade it in any of its powers, and especially in the noble and distinguishing power of reason, is to inflict on it universal injury. No notion is more false than that the heart is to thrive by dwarfing the intellect; that perplexing doctrines are the best food of piety; that religion flourishes most luxuriantly in mists and darkness. Reason was given for God as its great object; and for him it should be kept sacred, invigorated, clarified, and protected from human usurpation, and inspired with a meek self-reverence.

The soul never acts so effectually or joyfully, as when all its powers and affections conspire, as when thought, feeling, reason and sensibility, are called forth together by one great and kindling object. It will never devote itself to God with its whole energy, whilst its guiding faculty sees in him a being to shock and confound it. We want a harmony in our inward nature. We want a piety, which will join light and fervour, and on which the intellectual power will look benignantly. We want religion to be so exhibited, that, in the clearest moments of the intellect, its signatures of truth will grow brighter; that instead of tottering, it will gather strength and stability from the progress of the human mind. These wants we believe to be met by Unitarian Christianity, and therefore we prize it as the best friend of piety.

I have thus stated the chief grounds, on which I rest the claim of Unitarianism to the honour of promoting an enlightened, profound, and happy piety.

Am I now asked, why we prize our system, and why we build churches for its inculcation? If I may be allowed to express myself in the name of conscientious Unitarians, who apply their doctrine to their own hearts and lives, I would reply thus. We prize and would spread our views because we believe that they reveal God to us in greater glory, and bring us nearer to him, than any other. We are conscious of a deep want, which the creation cannot supply, the want of a perfect Being, on whom the strength of our love may be centered, and an Almighty Father, in whom our weaknesses, imperfections, and sorrows may find resource; and such a Being and Father, Unitarian Christianity sets before us. For this we prize it above all price. We can part with every other good. We can endure the darkening of life's fairer prospects. But this bright, consoling doctrine of One God even the Father, is dearer than life, and we cannot let it go.—Through this faith every thing grows brighter to our view. Born of such a Parent, we esteem our existence an inestimable gift. We meet every where our Father, and his presence is as a sun shining in our path. We see him in his works, and hear his praise rising from every spot which we tread. We feel him near in our solitudes, and sometimes enjoy communion with

him more tender than human friendship. We see him in our duties, and perform them more gladly, because they are the best tribute we can offer to our Heavenly Benefactor. Even the consciousness of sin, mournful as it is, does not subvert our peace; for in the mercy of God, as made manifest in Jesus Christ, we see an inexhaustible fountain of strength, purity, and pardon for all who, in filial reliance, seek these heavenly gifts.—Through this faith we are conscious of a new benevolence springing up to our fellow-creatures, purer and more enlarged than natural affection. Towards all mankind we see a rich and free love flowing from the common Parent, and touched by this love we are the friends of all. We compassionate the most guilty, and would win them back to God.—Through this faith, we receive the happiness of an ever enlarging hope. There is no good too vast for us to anticipate for the universe or for ourselves, from such a Father as we believe in. The horrible thought, of a large proportion of our fellow-creatures being cast by an angry God into tortures unutterable by human tongue, and sentenced to spend eternity in shrieks of agony, which will never reach the ear or touch the heart of their Creator; this dreadful anticipation, which would shroud the universe in more than sepulchral gloom, and is enough to break every heart which is not stone, this forms no part of our conception of the purposes and government of the God and Father of Jesus Christ. Whilst we believe, that every new view of the con-

stitution and administration of the universe will reveal more strikingly the solemn indissoluble connection between sin and suffering, we have equal confidence, that God's equity and kindness towards all his creatures will be more and more triumphantly and gloriously displayed. We have an earnest of heaven in the assurance, that all things are tending to a consummation, which, however undefined and incomprehensible now, will fill the benevolent heart with unmingled joy.—Through this faith, we not only hope for the universe, but hope for ourselves. We are told, indeed, that our faith will not prove an anchor in the last hour. But we have known those whose departure it has brightened; and our experience of its power, in trial and peril, has proved it to be equal to all the wants of human nature. We doubt not, that, to its sincere followers, death will be a transition to the calm, pure, joyful mansions prepared by Christ for his disciples. There we expect to meet that great and good Deliverer. With the eye of faith, we already see him looking round him with celestial love on all of every name, who have imbibed his spirit. *His spirit;* his loyal and entire devotion to the will of his Heavenly Father; his universal unconquerable benevolence, through which he freely gave from his pierced side his blood, his life for the salvation of the world; his divine love, and not creeds, and names, and forms, will then be found to attract his supreme regard. This spirit we trust to see in multitudes of every sect and name;

and we trust, too, that they, who now reproach us, will at that day recognise, in the dreaded Unitarian, this only badge of Christ, and will bid him welcome to the joy of our common Lord.—I have thus stated the views, with which we have reared this building. We desire to glorify God, to promote a purer, nobler, happier piety. Even if we err in doctrine, we think, that these motives should shield us from reproach; should disarm that intolerance, which would exclude us from the church on earth, and from our Father's house in heaven.

We end, as we began, by offering up this building to the only Living and True God. We have erected it amidst our private habitations, as a remembrancer of our Creator. We have reared it in this busy city, as a retreat for pious meditation and prayer. We dedicate it to the King and Father Eternal, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We dedicate it to his Unity, to his unrivalled and undivided Majesty. We dedicate it to the praise of his free, unbought, unmerited grace. We dedicate it to Jesus Christ, to the memory of his love, to the celebration of his divine virtue, to the preaching of that truth, which he sealed with his blood. We dedicate it to the Holy Spirit, to the sanctifying influence of God, to those celestial emanations of light and strength, which visit and refresh the devout mind. We dedicate it to prayer and praises, which we trust will be continued and perfected in heaven. We dedicate it to social worship, to Christian intercourse, to the

communion of saints. We dedicate it to the cause of pure morals, of public order, of equity, uprightness, and general good will. We dedicate it to Christian admonition, to those warnings, remonstrances, and earnest and tender persuasions, by which the sinner may be arrested, and brought back to God. We dedicate it to Christian consolation, to those truths which assuage sorrow, animate penitence, and lighten the load of human anxiety and fear. We dedicate it to the doctrine of Immortality, to sublime and joyful hopes which reach beyond the grave. In a word, we dedicate it to the great work of perfecting the human soul, and fitting it for nearer approach to its Author. Here may heart meet heart. Here may man see God. From this place may the song of praise, the ascription of gratitude, the sigh of penitence, the prayer for grace, and the holy resolve, ascend, as fragrant incense, to Heaven; and through many generations may parents bequeath to their children this house, as a sacred spot, where God had "lifted upon them his countenance," and given them pledges of his everlasting love.

SERMON V.

ON THE INSTALLATION OF

THE REV. MELLISH IRVING MOTTE,

AS PASTOR OF THE SOUTH CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY IN BOSTON.

MAY 21, 1828.

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."—2 TIMOTHY. i. 7.

WHY was Christianity given? Why did Christ seal it with his blood? Why is it to be preached? What is the great happiness it confers? What is the chief blessing for which it is to be prized? What is its pre-eminent glory, its first claim on the gratitude of mankind? These are great questions. I wish to answer them plainly, according to the light and ability which God has given me. I read the answer to them in the text. There I learn the great good which God confers through Jesus Christ. "He hath given us not the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The glory of Christianity is, the pure and lofty action which it communicates to the human mind. It does not breathe a timid, abject spirit. If it did, it would deserve no

praise. It gives power, energy, courage, constancy to the will; love, disinterestedness, enlarged affection to the heart; soundness, clearness, and vigour to the understanding. It rescues him who receives it from sin, from the sway of the passions; gives him the full and free use of his best powers; brings out and brightens the divine image in which he was created; and in this way not only bestows the promise, but the beginning of heaven. This is the excellence of Christianity.

This subject I propose to illustrate. Let me begin it with one remark, which I would willingly avoid, but which seems to me to be demanded by the circumstances in which I am placed. I beg you to remember, that in this discourse I speak in my own name, and in no other. I am not giving you the opinions of any sect or body of men, but my own. I hold myself alone responsible for what I utter. Let none listen to me for the purpose of learning what others think. I indeed belong to that class of Christians, who are distinguished by believing that there is One God, even the Father, and that Jesus Christ is not this one God, but his dependent and obedient Son. But my accordance with these is far from being universal, nor have I any desire to extend it. What other men believe is to me of little moment. Their arguments I gratefully hear. Their conclusions I am free to receive or reject. I have no anxiety to wear the livery of any party. I indeed take cheerfully the

name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry; and I have not so learned Christ, as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem is truth. Were the name more honoured, I should be glad to throw it off; for I fear the shackles which a party connection imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging, not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to stand under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly, but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads. I am then no organ of a sect, but speak from myself alone; and I thank God that I live at a time, and under circumstances, which make it my duty to lay open my whole mind with freedom and simplicity.

I began with asking, What is the main design and glory of Christianity? and I repeat the answer, that its design is to give, not a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind. In this its glory chiefly consists. In other words, *the influence which it is intended to exert on the human mind*, constitutes its supreme honour and happiness. Christ is a great Saviour, as he redeems or sets free the mind, cleansing it from evil, breathing into it the love of virtue, calling forth its noblest faculties and affections, enduing it with moral

power, restoring it to order, health, and liberty. Such was his great aim. To illustrate these views will be the object of the present discourse.

In reading the New Testament, I everywhere meet the end here ascribed to Jesus Christ. He came, as I am there taught, not to be an outward, but inward deliverer; not to rear an outward throne, but to establish his kingdom within us. He came, according to the express language and plain import of the sacred writers, *to save us from sin, to bless us by turning us from our iniquities, to redeem us* from corruptions *handed down by tradition,* to form *a glorious and spotless church,* or community, *to create us anew after the image of God,* to make us *by his promises partakers of a divine nature,* and to give us pardon and heaven by calling us to repentance and a growing virtue. In reading the New Testament, I everywhere learn, that Christ lived, taught, died, and rose again, *to exert a purifying and ennobling influence on the human character;* to make us victorious over sin, over ourselves, over peril and pain; to join us to God by filial love, and above all, by likeness of nature, by participation of his spirit. This is plainly laid down in the New Testament as the supreme end of Christ.

Let me now ask, Can a nobler end be ascribed to Jesus? I affirm, that there is, and can be no greater work on earth, than to purify the soul from evil, and to kindle in it new light, life, energy, and love. I maintain, that the true measure

name of a Unitarian, because unwearied efforts are used to raise against it a popular cry; and I have not so learned Christ, as to shrink from reproaches cast on what I deem is truth. Were the name more honoured, I should be glad to throw it off; for I fear the shackles which a party connection imposes. I wish to regard myself as belonging, not to a sect, but to the community of free minds, of lovers of truth, of followers of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. I desire to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to stand under the open sky, in the broad light, looking far and wide, seeing with my own eyes, hearing with my own ears, and following truth meekly, but resolutely, however arduous or solitary be the path in which she leads. I am then no organ of a sect, but speak from myself alone; and I thank God that I live at a time, and under circumstances, which make it my duty to lay open my whole mind with freedom and simplicity.

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possess within us what is of more worth than the external creation. For this outward system is the product of Mind. All its harmony, beauty, and beneficent influences, are the fruits and manifestations of Thought and Love; and is it not nobler and happier, to be enriched with these energies, from which the universe springs, and to which it owes its magnificence, than to possess the universe itself? It is not what we have, but what we *are*, which constitutes our glory and felicity. The only true and durable riches belong to the mind. A soul, narrow and debased, may extend its possessions to the end of the earth, but is poor and wretched still. It is through inward health that we enjoy all outward things. Philosophers teach us, that the mind creates the beauty which it admires in nature; and we all know, that, when abandoned to evil passions, it can blot out this beauty, and spread over the fairest scenes the gloom of a dungeon. We all know, that by vice it can turn the cup of social happiness into poison, and the most prosperous condition of life into a curse. From these views we learn, that the true friend and Saviour, is not he who acts for us abroad, but who acts within, who sets the soul free, touches the springs of thought and affection, binds us to God, and by assimilating us to the Creator, brings us into harmony with the creation. Thus the end which we have ascribed to Christ, is the most glorious and beneficent which can be

accomplished by any power on earth or in heaven.

That the highest purpose of Christianity is such as has now been affirmed, might easily be shown from a survey of all its doctrines and precepts. It might be shown, that every office with which Jesus Christ is invested, was intended to give him power over the human character; and that his great distinction consists in the grandeur and beneficence of his influence on the soul. But a discussion of this extent cannot be comprehended in a single discourse. Instead of a general survey of the subject, I shall take one feature of it, a primary and most important one, and shall attempt to show that the great aim of this is to call forth the soul to a higher life, to a nobler exercise of its power and affections.

This leading feature of Christianity, is the knowledge which it gives of the character of God. Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father. In the prophecies concerning him in the Old Testament, no characteristic is so frequently named, as that he should spread the knowledge of the true God. Now I ask, what constitutes the importance of such a revelation? Why has the Creator sent his Son to make himself known? I answer, God is most worthy to be known because he is the most quickening, purifying, and ennobling object for the mind; and his great purpose in revealing himself is, that he may exalt and perfect human nature. God, as he is

manifested by Christ, is another name for intellectual and moral excellence; and in the knowledge of him, our intellectual and moral powers find their element, nutriment, strength, expansion, and happiness. To know God is to attain to the sublimest conception in the universe. To love God is to bind ourselves to a being, who is fitted, as no other being is, to penetrate and move our whole hearts; in loving whom, we exalt ourselves; in loving whom, we love the great, the good, the beautiful, and the infinite; and under whose influence, the soul unfolds itself as a perennial plant under the cherishing sun. This constitutes the chief glory of religion. It ennobles the soul. In this its unrivalled dignity and happiness consist.

I fear that the world at large think religion a very different thing from what has now been set forth. Too many think it a depressing, rather than an elevating service, that it breaks rather than ennobles the spirit, that it teaches us to cower before an almighty and irresistible being; and I must confess, that religion, as it has been generally taught, is any thing but an elevating principle. It has been used to scare the child and appal the adult. Men have been virtually taught to glorify God by flattery, rather than by becoming excellent and glorious themselves, and thus doing honour to their Maker. Our dependence on God has been so taught as to extinguish the consciousness of our free nature and moral power. Religion, in one or another form,

has always been an engine for crushing the human soul. But such is not the religion of Christ. If it were, it would deserve no respect. We are not, we cannot be bound to prostrate ourselves before a deity, who makes us abject and base. That moral principle within us, which calls us to watch over and to perfect our own souls, is an inspiration, which no teaching can supersede or abolish. But I cannot bear, even in way of argument, to speak of Christianity as giving views of God depressing and debasing to the human mind. Christ hath revealed to us God as The Father, and as a Father in the noblest sense of that word. He hath revealed him, as the author and lover of all souls, desiring to redeem all from sin, and to impress his likeness more and more resplendently on all; as proffering to all that best gift in the universe, his "holy spirit;" as having sent his beloved Son to train us up, and to introduce us to an "inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading in the heavens." Such is the God of Jesus Christ; a being not to break the spirit, but to breathe trust, courage, constancy, magnanimity; in a word, all the sentiments which form an elevated mind.

This sentiment, that the knowledge of God, as given by Christ, is important and glorious, because quickening and exalting to the human soul, needs to be taught plainly and forcibly. The main ground of the obligation of being religious, I fear, is not understood among the multitude of Christians. Ask

them, why they must know and worship God, and I fear, that were the heart to speak, the answer would be, because he can do with us what he will, and consequently our first concern is to secure his favour. Religion is a calculation of interest, a means of safety. God is worshipped too often on the same principle on which flattery and personal attentions are lavished on human superiors; and the worshipper cares not how abjectly he bows, if he may win to his side the power which he cannot resist. I look with deep sorrow on this common perversion of the highest principle of the soul. My friends, God is not to be worshipped, because he has much to give, for on this principle a despot, who should be munificent to his slaves, would merit homage. He is not to be adored for mere power; for power, when joined with selfishness and crime, ought to be withstood; and the greater the might of an evil agent, the holier and the loftier is the spirit which will not bend to him. True religion is the worship of a perfect being, who is the author of perfection to those who adore him. On this ground, and on no other, religion rests.

Why is it, my hearers, that God has discovered such solicitude, if I may use the word, to make himself known and obtain our worship? Think you, that he calls us to adore him from a love of homage or service? Has God man's passion for ruling, man's thirst for applause, man's desire to have his name shouted by crowds? Could the acclamations of the

universe, though concentrated into one burst of praise, give our Creator a new or brighter consciousness of his own majesty and goodness? Oh! no. He has manifested himself to us, because, in the knowledge and adoration of his perfections, our own intellectual and moral perfection is found. What he desires, is, not our subjection, but our excellence. He has no love of praise. He calls us as truly to honour goodness in others as in himself, and only claims supreme honour, because he transcends all others, and because he communicates to the mind which receives him, a light, strength, purity, which no other being can confer. God has no love of empire. It could give him no pleasure to have his footstool worn by the knees of infinite hosts. It is to make us his children in the highest sense of that word, to make us more and more the partakers of his own nature, not to multiply slaves, that he hath sent his son to make himself known. God indeed is said to seek his own glory; but the glory of a creator must consist in the glory of his works; and we may be assured, that he cannot wish any recognition of himself, but that which will perfect his noblest, highest work, the immortal mind.

Do not, my friends, forget the great end for which Christ enjoins on us the worship of God. It is not that we may ingratiate ourselves with an almighty agent, whose frown is destruction. It is, that we may hold communion with an intelligence

and goodness, infinitely surpassing our own; that we may rise above imperfect and finite natures; that we may attach ourselves by love and reverence to the best Being in the Universe; and that through veneration and love we may receive into our own minds the excellence, disinterestedness, wisdom, purity, and power, which we adore. This reception of the divine attributes, I desire especially to hold forth, as the most glorious end for which God reveals himself. To praise him is not enough. That homage, which has no power to assimilate us to him, is of little or no worth. The truest admiration is that by which we receive other minds into our own. True praise is a sympathy with excellence, gaining strength by utterance. Such is the praise which God demands. Then only is the purpose of Christ's revelation of God accomplished, when, by reception of the doctrine of a Paternal Divinity, we are quickened to "follow him, as dear children," and are "filled with his fulness," and become "his temples," and "dwell in God, and have God dwelling in ourselves."

I have endeavoured to show the great purpose of the Christian doctrine respecting God, or in what its importance and glory consist. Had I time, I might show, that every other doctrine of our religion has the same end. I might particularly show how wonderfully fitted are the character, example, life, death, resurrection, and all the offices of Christ,

to cleanse the mind from moral evil, to quicken, soften, elevate, and transform it into the divine image; and I might show that these are the influences which true faith derives from him, and through which he works out our salvation. But I cannot enter on this fruitful subject. Let me only say, that I see every where in Christianity, this great design of liberating and raising the human mind, on which I have enlarged. I see in Christianity nothing narrowing or depressing, nothing of the littleness of the systems which human fear, and craft, and ambition have engendered. I meet there no minute legislation, no descending to precise details, no arbitrary injunctions, no yoke of ceremonies, no outward religion. Every thing breathes freedom, liberality, enlargement. I meet there, not a formal, rigid creed, binding on the intellect, through all ages, the mechanical, passive repetition of the same words, and the same ideas; but I meet a few grand, all-comprehending truths, which are given to the soul, to be developed and applied by itself; given to it as seed to the sower, to be cherished and expanded by its own thought, love, and obedience, into more and more glorious fruits of wisdom and virtue. I see it everywhere inculcating an enlarged spirit of piety and philanthropy, leaving each of us to manifest this spirit according to the monitions of his individual conscience. I hear it everywhere calling the soul to freedom and power, by calling it to guard against the senses, the passions, the appe-

tites, through which it is chained, enfeebled, destroyed. I see it everywhere aiming to give the mind power over the outward world, to make it superior to events, to suffering, to material nature, to persecution, to death. I see it everywhere aiming to give the mind power over itself, to invest it with inward sovereignty, to call forth within us a mighty energy for our own elevation. I meet in Christianity only discoveries of a vast, bold, illimitable character; fitted and designed to give energy and expansion to the soul. By its doctrine of a Universal Father, it sweeps away all the barriers of sect, party, rank and nation, in which men have laboured to shut up their love; makes us members of an unbounded family; and establishes sympathies between man and the whole intelligent creation. In the character of Christ, it sets before us *moral perfection*, that greatest and most quickening miracle in human history, a purity, which shows no stain or touch of the earth, an excellence unborrowed, unconfined, bearing no impress of any age or any nation, the very image of the Universal Father; and it encourages us, by assurances of God's merciful aid, to propose this enlarged, unsullied virtue, as the model and happiness of our moral nature. By the cross of Christ, it sets forth the spirit of self-sacrifice with an energy never known before, and, in thus crucifying selfishness, frees the mind from its worst chain. By Christ's resurrection, it links this short life with eternity, discovers to us in the fleeting present, the

germ of an endless future, reveals to us the human mind ascending to other worlds, breathing a free air, forming higher connections, and summons us to a force of holy purpose becoming such a destination. To conclude, Christianity everywhere sets before us God in the character of infinitely free, rich, boundless Grace, in a clemency which is "not overcome by evil, but overcomes evil with good;" and a more animating and ennobling truth, who of us can conceive? I have hardly glanced at what Christianity contains. But who does not see that it was sent from heaven, to call forth and exalt human nature, and that this is its great glory?

It has been my object in this discourse to lay open a great truth, a central, all-comprehending truth of Christianity. Whoever intelligently and cordially embraces it, obtains a standard by which to try all other doctrines, and to measure the importance of all other truths. Is it so embraced? I fear not. I apprehend that it is dimly discerned by many who acknowledge it, whilst on many more it has hardly dawned. I see other views prevailing, and prevailing in a greater or less degree among all bodies of Christians, and they seem to me among the worst errors of our times. Some of these I would now briefly notice.

I. There are those, who, instead of placing the glory of Christianity in the pure and powerful action which it gives to the human mind, seem to think, that it is rather designed to substitute the

activity of another for our own. They imagine the benefit of the religion to be, that it enlists on our side an almighty being who does every thing for us. To disparage human agency, seems to them the essence of piety. They think Christ's glory to consist, not in quickening free agents to act powerfully on themselves, but in changing them by an irresistible energy. They place a Christian's happiness, not so much in powers and affections unfolded in his own breast, as in a foreign care extended over him, in a foreign wisdom which takes the place of his own intelligence. Now the great purpose of Christianity is, not to procure or offer to the mind a friend on whom it may passively lean, but to make the mind itself wise, strong, and efficient. Its end is, not that wisdom and strength, as subsisting in another, should do every thing for us, but that these attributes should grow perpetually in our own souls. According to Christianity, we are not carried forward as a weight by a foreign agency; but God, by means suited to our moral nature, quickens and strengthens us to walk ourselves. The great design of Christianity is to build up in our own souls a power to withstand, to endure, to triumph. Inward vigour is its aim. That we should do most for ourselves and most for others, this is the glory it confers, and in this its happiness is found.

II. I pass to another illustration of the insensibility of men to the great doctrine, that the happi-

ness and glory of Christianity consist in the healthy and lofty frame to which it raises the mind. I refer to the propensity of multitudes to make a wide separation between religion, or Christian virtue, and its rewards. That the chief reward lies in the very spirit of religion, they do not dream. They think of being Christians for the sake of something beyond the Christian character, and something more precious. They think that Christ has a greater good to give, than a strong and generous love towards God and mankind; and would almost turn from him with scorn, if they thought him only a benefactor to the mind. It is this low view which dwarfs the piety of thousands. Multitudes are serving God for wages distinct from the service, and hence superstition, slavishness, and formality are substituted for inward energy and spiritual worship.

III. Men's ignorance of the great truth stated in this discourse, is seen in the low ideas attached by multitudes to the word, *salvation*. Ask multitudes, what is the chief evil from which Christ came to save them, and they will tell you, "From hell, from penal fires, from future punishment." Accordingly they think, that salvation is something which another may achieve for them, very much as a neighbour may quench a conflagration that menaces their dwellings and lives. That word *hell*, which is used so seldom in the sacred pages, which, as critics will tell you, does not occur once

in the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John, which we meet only in four or five discourses of Jesus, and which all persons, acquainted with Jewish geography, know to be a metaphor, a figure of speech, and not a literal expression, this word, by a perverse and exaggerated use, has done unspeakable injury to Christianity. It has possessed and diseased men's imaginations with outward tortures, shrieks, and flames; given them the idea of an outward ruin as what they have chiefly to dread; turned their thoughts to Jesus, as an outward deliverer; and thus blinded them to his true glory, which consists in his setting free and exalting the soul. Men are flying from an outward hell, when in truth they carry within them the hell which they should chiefly dread. The salvation which man chiefly needs, and that which brings with it all other deliverance, is salvation from the evil of his own mind. There is something far worse than outward punishment. It is sin; it is the state of a soul, which has revolted from God, and cast off its allegiance to conscience and the divine word; which renounces its Father, and hardens itself against Infinite Love; which, endued with divine powers, enthrals itself to animal lusts; which makes gain its god; which has capacities of boundless and ever-growing love, and shuts itself up in the dungeon of private interests; which, gifted with a self-directing power, consents to be a slave, and is passively formed by custom, opinion, and changing events;

which, living under God's eye, dreads man's frown or scorn, and prefers human praise to its own calm consciousness of virtue; which tamely yields to temptation, shrinks with a coward's baseness from the perils of duty, and sacrifices its glory and peace in parting with self-control. No ruin can be compared to this. This the impenitent man carries with him beyond the grave, and there meets its natural issue, and inevitable retribution, in remorse, self-torture, and woes unknown on earth. This we cannot too strongly fear. *To save*, in the highest sense of that word, is to lift the fallen spirit from this depth, to heal the diseased mind, to restore it to energy and freedom of thought, conscience, and love. This was chiefly the salvation for which Christ shed his blood. For this the holy spirit is given; and to this all the truths of Christianity conspire.

IV. Another illustration of the error which I am labouring to expose, and which places the glory and importance of Christianity in something besides its quickening influence on the soul, is afforded in the common apprehensions formed of heaven, and of the methods by which it may be obtained. Not a few, I suspect, conceive of heaven as a foreign good. It is a distant country, to which we are to be conveyed by an outward agency. How slowly do men learn, that heaven is the perfection of the mind, and that Christ gives it now just as far as he raises the mind to celestial

truth and virtue. It is true, that this word is often used to express a future felicity; but the blessedness of the future world is only a continuance of what is begun here. There is but one true happiness,—that of a mind unfolding its best powers, and attaching itself to great objects; and Christ gives heaven, only in proportion as he gives this elevation of character. The disinterestedness, and moral strength, and filial piety of the Christian, are not mere means of heaven, but heaven itself, and heaven now.

The most exalted idea we can form of the future state, is, that it brings and joins us to God. But is not approach to this great being begun on earth? Another delightful view of heaven is, that it unites us with the good and great of our own race, and even with higher orders of beings. But this union is one of spirit, not of mere place; it is accordance of thought and feeling, not an outward relation: and does not this harmony begin even now? and is not virtuous friendship on earth essentially the pleasure which we hope hereafter? What place would be drearier than the future mansions of Christ, to one who should want sympathy with their inhabitants, who could not understand their language, who would feel himself a foreigner there, who would be taught, by the joys which he could not partake, his own loneliness and desolation? These views, I know, are often given with greater or less distinctness; but they seem to me not to

have brought home to men the truth, that the fountain of happiness must be in our own souls. Gross ideas of futurity still prevail. I should not be surprised if to some among us the chief idea of heaven were that of a splendour, a radiance, like that which Christ wore on the Mount of Transfiguration. Let us all consider, and it is a great truth, that heaven has no lustre surpassing that of intellectual and moral worth; and that, were the effulgence of the sun and stars concentrated in the Christian, even this would be darkness, compared with the pure beamings of wisdom, love, and power from his mind. Think not then that Christ has come to give heaven as something distinct from virtue. Heaven is the freed and sanctified mind, enjoying God through accordance with his attributes, multiplying its bonds and sympathies with excellent beings, putting forth noble powers, and ministering, in union with the enlightened and holy, to the happiness and virtue of the universe.

My friends, I fear I have been guilty of repetition. But I feel the greatness of the truth which I deliver, and I am anxious to make it plain. Men need to be taught it perpetually. They have always been inclined to look to Christ for something better, as they have dreamed, than the elevation of their own souls. The great purpose of Christianity to unfold and strengthen and lift up the mind, has been perpetually thrown out of sight. In truth, this purpose has been more than overlooked. It has been re-

versed. The very religion, given to exalt human nature, has been used to make it abject. The very religion, which was given to create a generous hope, has been made an instrument of servile and torturing fear. The very religion, which came from God's goodness to enlarge the human soul with a kindred goodness, has been employed to narrow it to a sect, to rear the Inquisition, and to kindle fires for the martyr. The very religion, given to make the understanding and conscience free, has, by a criminal perversion, served to break them into subjection to priests, ministers, and human creeds. Ambition and craft have seized on the solemn doctrines of an omnipotent God and of future punishment, and turned them into engines against the child, the trembling female, the ignorant adult, until the sceptic has been emboldened to charge on religion the chief miseries and degradation of human nature. It is from a deep and sorrowful conviction of the injuries inflicted on Christianity and on the human soul, by these perversions and errors, that I have reiterated the great truth of this discourse. I would rescue our holy faith from this dishonour. Christianity has no tendency to break the human spirit, or to make man a slave. It has another aim; and as far as it is understood, it puts forth another power. God sent it from heaven, Christ sealed it with his blood, that it might give force of thought and purpose to the human mind, might free it from all fear but the fear of wrong-doing, might make

it free of its fellow beings, might break from it every outward and inward chain.

My hearers, I close with exhorting you to remember this great purpose of our religion. Receive Christianity as given to raise you in the scale of spiritual being. Expect from it no good any further than it gives strength and worth to your characters. Think not, as some seem to think, that Christ has a higher gift than purity to bestow, even pardon to the sinner. He does bring pardon. But once separate the idea of pardon from purity; once imagine that forgiveness is possible to him who does not forsake sin; once make it an exemption from outward punishment, and not the admission of the reformed mind to favour and communion with God; and the doctrine of pardon becomes your peril, and a system, so teaching it, is fraught with evil. Expect no good from Christ any further than you are exalted by his character and teaching. Expect nothing from his cross, unless a power comes from it, strengthening you to "bear his cross," to "drink his cup," with his own unconquerable love. This is its highest influence. "Look not abroad for the blessings of Christ. His reign and chief blessings are within you. The human soul is his kingdom. There he gains his victories, there rears his temples, there lavishes his treasures. His noblest monument is a mind, redeemed from iniquity, brought back and devoted to God, forming itself after the perfection

of the Saviour, great through its power to suffer for truth, lovely through its meek and gentle virtues. No other monument does Christ desire; for this will endure and increase in splendour, when earthly thrones shall have fallen, and even when the present order of the outward universe shall have accomplished its work, and shall have passed away.

SERMON VI.

ON

THE DAY OF THE PUBLIC FAST.

APRIL 5th, 1810.

"*Can ye not discern the signs of the times?*"—MATTHEW, xvi. 3.

It is the design of a day of fasting to produce in a people a sense of their dependence on God; and a deep, penitent conviction of those sins, by which they have exposed themselves to his displeasure. This is a day on which it becomes us to contemplate our situation with seriousness; to inquire into our dangers; to ask ourselves whether we have not provoked divine judgments, and whether divine judgments are not hanging over us; and to implore with humble importunity the forgiveness and blessing of Him, whose word fixes the destinies of nations; whose good providence has been our refuge in the past; whose favour is our only hope for the future.

Perhaps, my friends, we have never before assembled on a day of fasting, when we have had such reason for apprehension and humiliation as at

this time. The world is in tears. The fairest portions of the earth, the abodes of civilization and refinement, are laid waste. The storm of war and oppression is spreading its fury and desolation. We not only hear it at a distance; it approaches us, and threatens all we hold dear. Nation after nation is falling with a portentous sound; while the conqueror discovers no symptoms of being wearied with his work. It is not enough that so many thousands of victims have bled on the altar of his ambition. It is not enough that so many ancient thrones have fallen at his feet. Every new acquisition serves but to enlarge his views, and is regarded but as a pledge and promise of wider domination.

At this awful period well may we fear. The stoutest heart may be excused, if it trembles at the scenes which open before us. On this day, when our sins and dangers as a people are the very objects on which we ought to fix attention, my mind is irresistibly impelled to dwell on the judgments of God, which are abroad in the earth, and on the ground we have for apprehending that these judgments will visit us also. In discoursing on these subjects I do not feel that I am departing from my province as a minister of Christ. As Christians, we ought to have *a strong and lively sensibility* to the miseries of the world in which we live, and especially to the miseries which threaten ourselves, and all whom we love. As Christians, we have the deepest concern in the present state of the world;

for the *interests of religion and morality*, as well as national independence and prosperity, are threatened by the great enemy of mankind.

I have been led to select the words of the text on the present occasion, as it appears to me that the reproach, which they contain, applies strongly to this country. It may be said of us as of the ancient Jews, that we "do not discern the signs of the times;"—that we are insensible to the peculiar character and features of the age, in which we live. I will not say that the present age is as strongly marked or distinguished from all other ages, as that in which Jesus Christ appeared: but with that single exception, perhaps the present age is the most eventful period the world has ever known. We live in times which have no parallel in past ages; in times when the human character has almost assumed a new form; in times of peculiar calamity, of thick darkness, and almost of despair.—But to me it appears, that as a people we "do not discern the signs of the times;"—that we have no just impression of the awful, disastrous state of the world; and it is this *insensibility* which strikes me as one of the most alarming symptoms in our condition. The danger is so vast, so awful, and so obvious, that the blindness, the indifference, which prevail, argue infatuation, and give room for apprehension, that nothing can rouse us to those efforts, by which alone the danger can be averted.

Am I asked, what there is so peculiar and so tre-

mendous in the times in which we live? My sentiments on this subject I shall now offer, I hope from pure motives, with the spirit of Christian benevolence; not wishing to force my views on others, but to excite serious, impartial attention to a subject, which almost overwhelms me with its solemnity and importance. Am I then asked what there is so peculiar and so tremendous in our times? I answer; In the very heart of Europe, in the centre of the civilized world, a new power has suddenly arisen, on the ruins of old institutions, peculiar in its character, and most ruinous in its influence. We there see a nation which, from its situation, its fertility, and population, has always held a commanding rank in Europe, suddenly casting off the form of government, the laws, the habits, the spirit, by which it was assimilated to surrounding nations, and by which it gave to surrounding nations the power of restraining it; and all at once assuming a new form, and erecting a new government, free in name and profession, but holding at its absolute disposal the property and life of every subject, and directing all its energies to the subjugation of foreign countries. We see the supreme power of this nation passing in rapid succession from one hand to another; but its object never changes.—We see it dividing and corrupting by its arts, and then overwhelming by its arms, the nations which surround it. We see one end steadily kept in view—the creation of an irresistible military power. For

this end we see every man, in the prime of life, subjected to military service. We see military talent every where excited, and by every means rewarded. The arts of life, agriculture, commerce, all are of secondary value. In short, we see a mighty nation sacrificing every blessing in the prosecution of an unprincipled attempt at universal conquest.

The RESULT you well know. The surrounding nations, unprepared for this new conflict, and absolutely incapacitated by their old habits and institutions, to meet this new power on equal terms, have fallen in melancholy succession; and each as it has fallen, has swelled by its plunder the power and rapacity of its conquerors. We now behold this nation triumphant over continental Europe. Its armies are immensely numerous; yet the number is not the circumstance which renders them most formidable. These armies have been trained to conquest by the most perfect discipline. At their head are generals, who have risen only by military merit. They are habituated to victory, and their enemies are habituated to defeat.

All this immense power is now centered in one hand, wielded by one mind,—a mind formed in scenes of revolution and blood,—a mind most vigorous and capacious; but whose capacity is filled with plans of dominion and devastation. It has not room for one thought of mercy. The personal character of Napoleon is of itself sufficient to inspire the gloomiest forebodings. But in addition to his

lust for power, he is almost impelled by the necessity of his circumstances, to carry on the bloody work of conquest. His immense armies, the only foundations of his empire, must be supported.—Impoverished France, however, cannot give them support. They must therefore live on the spoils of other nations. But the nations which they successively spoil, and whose industry and arts they extinguish, cannot long sustain them.—Hence they must pour themselves into new regions. Hence plunder, devastation, and new conquests, are not merely the outrages of wanton barbarity; they are essential even to the existence of this tremendous power.

What overwhelming, disheartening prospects are these! In the midst of Christendom, this most sanguinary power has reared its head, and holds the world in defiance.—And now let me ask, How are we impressed in these dark, disastrous times?—Here is enough to rend the heart of sensibility. Here is every form of misery. We are called to sympathize with fallen greatness, with descendants of ancient sovereigns, hurled from their thrones, and cast out to contempt; and if these will not move us, our sympathy is demanded by a wretched peasantry, driven from their humble roofs, and abandoned to hunger and unsheltered poverty. The decaying city, the desolated country, the weeping widow, the forsaken orphan, call on us for our tears. Nations broken in spirit, yet forced to smother their sorrows, call on us with a silent eloquence, to feel

for their wrongs;—and how are we moved by these scenes of ruin, horror, and alarm? Does there not, my friends, prevail among us a cold indifference, as if all this were nothing to us, as if no tie of brotherhood bound us to these sufferers? Are we not prone to follow the authors of this ruin with an admiration of their power and success, which almost represses our abhorrence of their unsparing cruelty?

But we are not merely insensible to the calamities of other nations. There is a still stranger insensibility to our own dangers. We seem determined to believe, that this storm will spend all its force at a distance. The idea that *we* are marked out as victims of this all-destroying despotism; *that our turn is to come, and perhaps is near*,—this idea strikes on most minds as a fiction. Our own deep interest in the present conflict is unfelt even by some, who feel as they ought for other nations.

It is asked, what has a nation so distant as America to fear from the power of France? I answer: the history of all ages teaches us, all our knowledge of human nature teaches us, *that a nation of vast and unrivalled power is to be feared by all the world*. Even had France attained her present greatness under a long established government, without any of the habits which the revolution has formed, the world ought to view her with trembling jealousy. What nation ever enjoyed such power without abusing it? But France is not a common nation. We must not apply to her common rules.

Conquest is her trade, her business, her recreation. The lust of power is the very vital principle of this new nation. Her strength is drained out to supply her armies;—her talents exhausted in preparing schemes of wider domination. WAR, WAR, is the solemn note which resounds through every department of state. And is such a nation to be viewed with indifference, with unconcern? Have *we* nothing to fear, because *an ocean rolls between us?*

Will it be said that the conqueror has too much work at home to care for America? He has indeed work at home; but, unhappily for this country, that work ever brings *us* to his view. There is one work, one object, which is ever present to the mind of Napoleon. It mingles with all his thoughts. It is his dream by night, his care by day. He did not forget it on the shores of the Baltic, or the banks of the Danube. *The ruin of England* is the first, the most settled purpose of his heart. That nation is the only barrier to his ambition. In the opulence, the energy, the public spirit, the liberty of England, he sees the only obstacles to universal domination. England once fallen, and the civilized world lies at his feet. England erect, and there is one asylum for virtue, magnanimity, freedom; one spark which may set the world on fire; one nation to encourage the disaffected, to hold up to the oppressed the standard of revolt. England therefore is the great object of the hostile fury of the French emperor. England is the great end of his plans; and his plans of course on

brace all nations, which come in contact with England; which love or hate her, which can give her support, or contribute to her downfall. *We* then, we may be assured, are not overlooked by Napoleon. We are a nation sprung from England. We have received from her our laws, and many of our institutions. We speak her language, and in her language we dare to express the indignation which she feels at oppression. Besides, we have other ties which connect us with England. We are a commercial people, commercial by habit, commercial by our very situation. But no nation can be commercial without maintaining some connection with England, without having many common interests with her, without strengthening the foundations of her greatness. England is the great emporium of the world: and the conqueror knows that it is only by extinguishing the commerce of the world, by bringing every commercial nation to bear his yoke, that he can fix a mortal wound on England.—Besides, we are the neighbours of some of the most valuable English Colonies, and can exert an important influence on those channels of her commerce, those sources of her opulence.

Can we then suppose that the ambitious, the keen-sighted Napoleon overlooks *us* in his schemes of universal conquest; that he wants nothing of us, and is content that we should prosper and be at peace, because we are so distant from his throne? Has he not already told us that we must embark in

his cause? Has he not himself declared war for us against England?

Will it be said, he wants not to conquer us, but only wishes us to be his allies? *Allies of France!* Is there a man who does not shudder at the thought? Is there one who had not rather struggle nobly, and perish under her open enmity, than be crushed by the embrace of her friendship, *her alliance?* To show you the happiness of her alliance, I will not carry you back to Venice, Switzerland, Holland. Their expiring groans are almost forgotten amidst later outrages. SPAIN, SPAIN is the ally to whom I would direct you. Are you lovers of treachery, perfidy, rapacity, and massacre? then aspire after the honour which Spain has forfeited, and become the ally of France.

Will it be said that these evils are *political* evils, and that it is not the province of a minister of religion to concern himself with temporal affairs? Did I think, my friends, that only political evils were to be dreaded; did I believe that *the minds, the character, the morals, the religion* of our nation would remain untouched; did I see in French domination nothing but the loss of your wealth, your luxuries, your splendour; could I hope that it would leave unsullied your purity of faith and manners, I would be silent.* But religion and virtue, as

* I insert this Note, that I may express more fully my sorrow and dismay at the influence of the French domination on the *moral and religious* state of the world. I need not recall to my readers

well as liberty and opulence, wither under the power of France. The French revolution was founded in infidelity, impiety, and atheism. This is the spirit of her chiefs, her most distinguished men; and this spirit she breathes, wherever she has influence. It is the most unhappy effect of French domination, that it degrades the human character to the lowest point. No manly virtues grow under this baneful, malignant star. France begins her conquests by corruption, by venality, by bribes; and where she succeeds, her deadly policy secures her from commotion, by quenching all those generous sentiments, which produce revolt under oppression. The con-

the blasphemies and impieties of the authors of the French revolution. Oh that their spirit had perished with them! But the shock, which they gave to the religious principles and feelings of their own and other nations, is still felt. I have heard truly affecting accounts of the depraved state of France, of the general insensibility to God which pervades the nation, of the selfishness and licentiousness of the rich, of the fraud and oppression of men in power, and of the want of mutual confidence among all ranks of people.

Wherever French power extends, the same effects are produced. A cold and suspicious selfishness is diffused through society. Traitors are rewarded with power. An invisible army of spies, more terrible than the legions of the conqueror, are scattered abroad to repress that frank communication, which relieves and improves the heart. The *press* is in bondage. Nothing issues from it, but what accords with the views of the conqueror. Offensive truth is a crime not easily expiated. Under such strong temptations to flattery and deceit, the *love of truth* cannot long subsist. I fear, that if the fall of England should place the world in the power of France, the press would become the greatest scourge of mankind. No sentiments but what are approved by an unprinci-

queror thinks his work not half finished, until the *mind is conquered*,—its energy broken, its feeling for the public welfare subdued. Such are the effects of subjection to France, or, what is the same thing, of *alliance* with her: and when we consider how much this subjection is desired by Napoleon; when we consider the power and the arts, which he can combine for effecting his wishes and purposes, what reason have we to tremble!

It may be asked, whether I intend by these re-

pled despotism, would reach the next generation; and these sentiments would be poured into their minds, by means of the press, with a facility never possessed before the discovery of printing.

Let me here observe, that the contrast of England with France, in point of *morals* and *religion*, is one ground of hope to the devout mind in these dark and troubled times. On this subject, I have heard but one opinion from good men, who have visited the two countries. The character of England is to be estimated particularly from what may be called the *middle class* of society, the most numerous class in all nations, and more numerous and influential in England than in any other nation of Europe. The warm piety, the active benevolence, and the independent and manly thinking, which are found in this class, do encourage me in the belief, that England will not be forsaken by God in her solemn struggle.

I feel myself bound to all nations by the ties of a common nature, a common Father, and a common Saviour. But I feel a peculiar interest in England; for I believe, that there Christianity is exerting its best influences on the human character; that there the perfections of human nature, wisdom, virtue, and piety, are fostered by excellent institutions, and are producing the delightful fruits of domestic happiness, social order, and general prosperity. It is a hope, which I could not resign without anguish, that the "prayers and alms" of England "will come up for a memorial before God," and will obtain for her his sure protection against the common enemy of the civilised world.

marks to represent my country as hopeless? No; my friends, I have held up the *danger* of our country in all its magnitude, only that I may in my humble measure excite that spirit, which is necessary, and which by the blessing of Providence may be effectual to avert it. Alarming as our condition is, there does appear to me to be one method of safety, and only one. *As a people, we must be brought to see and to feel our danger; we must be excited to a public spirit, to an energy, a magnanimity, proportioned to the solemnity of the times in which we are called to act.*—If I may be permitted, I would say to the upright, the disinterested, the enlightened friends of their country, that the times demand new and peculiar exertions. In the present state of the world, there is, under God, but one hope of a people; and that is, their own exalted virtue. This therefore should be your object and labour,—to fix the understandings of the people, on the calamities that are approaching them; to enlighten the public mind; to improve our moral feelings; to breathe around you an elevated spirit; to fortify as many hearts as possible with the generous purpose to do all which men can do for the preservation of their country. —You should labour, not to excite a temporary paroxysm, for the danger is not to be repelled by a few impassioned efforts. We want a calm and solemn impression fixed in every mind, that we have every thing at stake,—that great sacrifices are to be expected, but that the evils are so tremendous as to

justify and require every sacrifice. We want to have a general impression made of the character, spirit, designs, power, and acts of France,—of the unparalleled wretchedness, the political, moral, and religious debasement, attendant on union with her, or on subjection to her power. To effect this end, I have said, that new exertions should be made. The common vehicles of information have done, and may do much; but cannot do all which is required. Authentic publications *in the names* of our wisest, purest, most venerated citizens, should be spread abroad, containing the plain, unexaggerated, uncoloured history of the revolution and domination of France.

It may be said, that the people have all the evidence on this subject already communicated to them. I fear that many have not received sufficiently distinct and connected information, from sources on which they rely; and I am confident, that many who know the truth, need to have the convictions of their understandings converted into active principles, into convictions of the heart. I fear there are many who are blinded to the true character of the conqueror of Europe, by the splendour of his victories; many, who attach to him the noble qualities which have been displayed by other heroes, and who repose a secret hope in his clemency. They ought to know, and they might know, that he has risen to power in a revolution, which has had a peculiar influence in hardening the heart; that his

character is unillumined by one ray of beneficence; that he is dark, vindictive, unrelenting; that no man loves him, that he cares for no man's love; that he asks only to be feared, and that fear and horror are the only sentiments he ought to inspire.

I fear there are many, who attach ideas of *happiness* and glory to France, because they hear of the conquest of French armies; and I fear that this impression reconciles them to the thought of union with her. They might know, and they ought to know, *that France is drinking even to the dregs that cup of sorrow, which she has mingled for other nations.* They should be taught, that she is most degraded in her *moral* and *religious* condition, and wretchedly impoverished: that her agriculture, her manufactures, her commercial cities, are falling to decay; that she is ground with oppressive taxes, most oppressively collected; that her youth are torn from their families, to fill up the constant ravages which war and disease are making in her armies; that with all her sufferings she is not permitted the poor privilege of complaining; that her cities, villages, and houses, are thronged with spies to catch and report the murmurs of disaffection. In a word, the people might and should be taught, that social confidence, public spirit, enterprise, cheerful industry, and moral and religious excellence, have almost forsaken that unhappy country.

On these topics, and on many others which would illustrate the character and tendency of the French

domination, might not conviction be carried to some minds at least; and might not many sluggish minds be awakened, if persevering, steady efforts were made by men, whose characters would be pledges of their veracity and disinterestedness? Sudden effects might not be produced, and perhaps sudden effects are not to be desired. We do not want a temporary, evanescent ardour, excited for partial purposes, and local objects. We want a rational conviction of their great danger fastened on the people, and a steady and generous purpose to resist it by every means, which Providence has put within their power. Let me intreat all who are interested in this great object, the improvement and elevation of public sentiment, to adhere to such means only as are worthy that great end; to suppress and condemn all appeals to unworthy passions, all misrepresentation, and all that abuse, which depraves public taste and sentiment, and makes a man of a pure mind ashamed of the cause, which he feels himself bound to support. Let me also urge you to check the feelings and the expressions of malignity and revenge. Curses, denunciations, and angry invectives, are not the language of that spirit to which I look for the safety of our country. We ought to know that the *malignant passions* of a people are among the powerful instruments, by which the enemy binds them to his yoke. The patriotism which we need, is a benevolent, generous, forbearing spirit; too much engrossed with the public welfare to

be stung by personal opposition; calm and patient in exhibiting the truth; and tolerant towards those who cannot or who will not receive it. Let me repeat it; the end we should propose, the elevation of public sentiment and feeling, is not to be secured by violence or passion, but by *truth*, from the hearts, and lips, and pens of men, whose lives and characters give it energy.

But as the most effectual method of exalting the views, purposes, and character of our nation, let me intreat you, who are lovers of your country, to labour with all your power *to diffuse the faith and practice of the Gospel of Christ*. The prevalence of true Christianity is the best defence of a nation, especially at this solemn and eventful period. It will secure to us the blessing of Almighty God; and it will operate more powerfully than any other cause, in making us recoil from the embrace of France. No greater repugnance can be conceived, than what subsists between the mild, humane, peaceful, righteous, and devout spirit of the Gospel, and the impious, aspiring, and rapacious spirit of this new nation. Christianity will indeed exclude from our breasts all feelings of ill-will, malice and revenge, towards France and her sovereign; for these are feelings which it never tolerates. But it will inspire an holy abhorrence of her spirit and designs, and will make us shudder at the thought of sinking under her power, or aiding her success.

But it becomes us to promote Christianity, not

only because it will *help to save* our country: we should cherish and diffuse it, because it will be a refuge and consolation, *even should our country fall*, a support, which the oppressor cannot take from us. The sincere Christian is not comfortless even in the darkest and most degenerate times. He knows that oppressive power is but for a moment; and his benevolence is animated by the promise of God, that even in this world, this scene of cruelty and wretchedness, there will yet be enjoyed the reign of peace, of truth, and holiness under the benignant Saviour. And this is not all. He looks upwards with a serene and ennobling hope to another and a better world, where the wicked never trouble, where the weary are at rest; where the rage of party never agitates; where he shall be associated with wise, pure, and good beings, in retracing and admiring the dispensations of Providence, under which he now suffers; in exploring and extolling the works, ways, and perfections of God, and in accomplishing with an ardent and unwearied love his benevolent designs. May we, my friends, so pass through this stormy world, so fulfil our duty in this dark and trying day, that we shall be welcome to the abodes of light and peace through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

SERMON VII.

ON

THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise."—EPHESIANS, vi. 1, 2.

FROM these words I propose to point out the duties of children to their parents. My young friends, let me ask your serious attention. I wish to explain to you the honour and obedience which you are required to render your parents; and to impress you with the importance, excellence, and happiness of this temper and conduct.

It will be observed, in the progress of this discourse, that I have chiefly in view the youngest part of my hearers; but I would not on this account be supposed to intimate, that those who have reached more advanced periods of life, are exempted from the obligation of honouring their parents. However old we may be, we should never forget that tenderness, which watched over our infancy, which listened to our cries before we could articulate our wants, and was never weary with ministering to our comfort and enjoyments. There is scarce-

ly any thing more interesting than to see the *man* retaining the respect and gratitude, which belong to the *child;* than to see persons, who have come forward into life, remembering with affection the guides and friends of their youth, and labouring by their kind and respectful attention to cheer the declining years, and support the trembling infirmities of those, whose best days were spent in solicitude and exertion for their happiness and improvement. He who suffers any objects or pursuits to shut out a parent from his heart, who becomes so weaned from the breast which nourished and the arms which cherished him, as coldly to forsake a parent's dwelling, and neglect a parent's comfort, not only renounces the dictates of religion and morality, but deserves to be cast out from society, as a stranger to the common sensibilities of human nature.

In the observations I am now to make, all who have parents should feel an interest; for some remarks will apply to all. But I shall principally confine myself to those, who are so young as to depend on the care and to live under the eye of their parents; who surround a parent's table, dwell beneath a parent's roof, and hear continually a parent's voice. To such the text addresses itself, "Honour and obey your father and mother."

I shall now attempt to explain and enforce what is here required of you.

First, You are required to view and treat your parents with *respect.* Your tender, inexperienced

age requires that you think of yourselves with humility, and conduct yourselves with modesty; that you respect the superior age and wisdom and improvements of your parents, and observe towards them a submissive deportment. Nothing is more unbecoming in you, nothing will render you more unpleasant in the eyes of others, than froward or contemptuous conduct towards your parents. There are children, and I wish I could say there are only a few, who speak to their parents with rudeness, grow sullen at their rebukes, behave in their presence as if they deserved no attention, hear them speak without noticing them, and rather ridicule than honour them. There are many children at the present day, who think more highly of themselves than of their elders; who think that their own wishes are first to be gratified; who abuse the condescension and kindness of their parents, and treat them as servants rather than superiors.

Beware, my young friends, lest you grow up with this assuming and selfish spirit. Regard your parents as kindly given you by God, to support, direct, and govern you in your present state of weakness and inexperience. Express your respect for them in your manner and conversation. Do not neglect those outward signs of dependence and inferiority which suit your age. You are young, and you should therefore take the lowest place, and rather retire than thrust yourselves forward into notice. You have much to learn, and you should therefore hear

instead of seeking to be heard. You are dependent, and you should therefore *ask* instead of *demanding* what you desire, and you should receive every thing from your parents as a favour, and not as a debt. I do not mean to urge upon you a slavish fear of your parents. Love them, and love them ardently; but mingle a sense of their superiority with your love. Feel a confidence in their kindness; but let not this confidence make you rude and presumptuous, and lead to indecent familiarity. Talk to them with openness and freedom; but never contradict with violence; never answer with passion or contempt.

The Scriptures say, "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." "The eye that mocketh at his father, the ravens of the valley shall pluck it out, and the young ravens shall eat it." The sacred history teaches us, that when Solomon, on his throne, saw his mother approaching him, he rose to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and caused a seat to be set for her on his right hand. Let this wise and great king teach you to respect your parents.

Secondly, You should be grateful to your parents. Consider how much you owe them. The time has been, and it was not a long time past, when you depended wholly on their kindness, when you had no strength to make a single effort for yourselves, when you could neither speak, nor walk, and knew not the use of any of your powers. Had not a parent's arm supported you, you must have fallen to

the earth and perished. Observe with attention the infants, which you so often see, and consider that a little while ago you were as feeble as they are; you were only a burden and a care, and you had nothing, with which you could repay your parents' affection. But did they forsake you? How many sleepless nights have they been disturbed by your cries! When you were sick, how tenderly did they hang over you! With what pleasure have they seen you grow up in health to your present state; and what do you now possess, which you have not received from their hands? God indeed is your great parent, your best friend, and from him every good gift descends; but God is pleased to bestow every thing upon you through the kindness of your parents. To your parents you owe every comfort; you owe to them the shelter you enjoy from the rain and cold, the raiment which covers, and the food which nourishes you. While you are seeking amusement, or are employed in gaining knowledge at school, your parents are toiling that you may be happy, that your wants may be supplied, that your minds may be improved, that you may grow up and be useful in the world. And when you consider how often you have forfeited all this kindness, and yet how ready they have been to forgive you, and to continue their favours, ought you not to look upon them with the tenderest gratitude? What greater monster can there be than an unthankful child, whose heart is never warmed and

melted by the daily expressions of parental solicitude; who, instead of requiting his best friend by his affectionate conduct, is sullen and passionate, and thinks that his parents have done nothing for him, because they will not do all he desires? My young friends, your parents' hearts have ached enough for you already; you should strive from this time, by your expressions of gratitude and love, to requite their goodness. Do you ask how you may best express these feelings of respect and gratitude, which have been enjoined? In answer I would observe,

Thirdly, That you must make it your study to obey your parents, to do what they command, and do it cheerfully. Your own hearts will tell you that this is a most natural and proper expression of honour and love. For how often do we see children opposing their wills to the will of their parents; refusing to comply with absolute commands; growing more obstinate, the more they are required to do what they dislike; and at last sullenly and unwillingly obeying, because they can no longer refuse without exposing themselves to punishment. Consider, my young friends, that by such conduct you very much displease God, who has given you parents, that they may control your passions and train you up in the way you should go. Consider how much better they can decide for you, than you can for yourselves. You know but little of the world in which you live. You hastily catch at every

thing which promises you pleasure; and unless the authority of a parent should restrain you, you would soon rush into ruin, without a thought or a fear. In pursuing your own inclinations your health would be destroyed, your minds would run waste, you would grow up slothful, selfish, a trouble to others, and burthensome to yourselves. Submit then cheerfully to your parents. Have you not experienced their goodness long enough to know that they wish to make you happy, even when their commands are most severe? Prove then your sense of their goodness by doing cheerfully what they require. When they oppose your wishes, do not think that you have more knowledge than they. Do not receive their commands with a sour, angry, sullen look, which says louder than words, that you obey only because you dare not rebel. If they deny your requests, do not persist in urging them; but consider how many requests they have already granted you. Consider that you have no claim upon them, and that it will be base and ungrateful for you, after all their tenderness, to murmur and complain. Do not expect that your parents are to give up every thing to your wishes; but study to give up every thing to theirs. Do not wait for them to threaten; but when a look tells you what they want, fly to perform it. This is the way in which you can best reward them for all their pains and labours. In this way you will make their houses pleasant and cheerful. But if you are disobedient, perverse, and stubborn, you

will be uneasy yourselves, and will make all around you unhappy. You will make home a place of contention, noise and anger; and your best friends will have reason to wish that you had never been born. A disobedient child almost always grows up ill-natured and disobliging to all with whom he is connected. None love him, and he has no heart to love any but himself. If you would be amiable in your temper and manner, and desire to be beloved, let me advise you to begin life with giving up your wills to your parents.

Fourthly, You must further express your respect, affection and gratitude by doing all in your power to assist and oblige your parents. Children can very soon make some return for the kindness they receive. Every day you can render your parents some little service, and often save them many cares, and sometimes not a little expense. There have been children who in early life have been great supports to their sick, poor, and helpless parents. This is the most honourable way in which you can be employed. You must never think too highly of yourselves to be unwilling to do any thing for those who have done so much for you. You should never let your amusements take such a hold of your minds, as to make you slothful, backward and unwilling, when you are called to serve your parents. Some children seem to think that they have nothing to seek but their own pleasure. They will run from every task which is imposed on them; and leave

their parents to want many comforts, rather than expose themselves to a little trouble. But consider, had they loved you no better than you love them, how wretched would have been your state! There are some children, who not only refuse to exert themselves for their parents, but add very much to their cares, give them unnecessary trouble, and by carelessness, by wasting, by extravagance, help to keep them in poverty and toil. Such children as they grow up, instead of seeking to provide for themselves, generally grow more and more burdensome to their friends, and lead useless, sluggish, and often profligate lives. My young friends, you should be ashamed, after having given your parents so much pain, to multiply their cares and labours unnecessarily. You should learn, very early, to be active in pleasing them, and active in doing what you can for yourselves. Do not waste all your spirit upon play; but learn to be useful. Perhaps the time is coming, when your parents will need as much attention from you, as you have received from them; and you should endeavour to form such industrious, obliging habits, that you may render their last years as happy, as they have rendered the first years of your existence.

Fifthly, You should express your respect for your parents and your sense of their kindness and superior wisdom, by placing unreserved confidence in them. This is a very important part of your duty. Children should learn to be honest, sincere; and

open hearted to their parents. An artful, hypocritical child is one of the most unpromising characters in the world. You should have no secrets which you are unwilling to disclose to your parents. If you have done wrong, you should openly confess it, and ask that forgiveness which a parent's heart is so ready to bestow. If you wish to undertake any thing, ask their consent. Never begin any thing in the hope that you can conceal your design. If you once strive to impose on your parents, you will be led on, from one step to another, to invent falsehoods, to practise artifice, till you will become contemptible and hateful. You will soon be detected; and then none will trust you. Sincerity in a child will make up for many faults. Of children, he is the worst, who watches the eyes of his parents, pretends to obey as long as they see him, but as soon as they have turned away, does what they have forbidden. Whatever else you do, never deceive. Let your parents always learn your faults from your own lips; and be assured they will never love you the less for your openness and sincerity.

Lastly, You must prove your respect and gratitude to your parents by attending seriously to their instructions and admonitions, and by improving the advantages they afford you for becoming wise, useful, good and happy forever. I hope, my young friends, that you have parents who take care, not only of your bodies, but your souls; who instruct you in your duty, who talk to you of your God and

Saviour, who teach you to pray and to read the Scriptures, and who strive to give you such knowledge, and bring you up in such habits, as will lead you to usefulness on earth, and to happiness in heaven. If you have not, I can only pity you: I have little hope that I can do you good by what I have here said. But if your parents are faithful in instructing and guiding you, you must prove your gratitude to them and to God, by listening respectfully and attentively to what they say; by shunning the temptations of which they warn you, and by walking in the paths they mark out before you. You must labour to answer their hopes and wishes, by improving in knowledge; by being industrious at school; by living peaceably with your companions; by avoiding all profane and wicked language; by fleeing bad company; by treating all persons with respect; by being kind and generous and honest, and by loving and serving your Father in heaven. This is the happiest and most delightful way of repaying the kindness of your parents. Let them see you growing up with amiable tempers and industrious habits; let them see you delighting to do good, and fearing to offend God; and they will think you have never been a burden. Their fears and anxieties about you will give place to brighter views. They will hope to see you prosperous, respected and beloved in the present world. But if in this they are to be disappointed, if they are soon to see you stretched on the bed of sickness and

death, they will still smile amidst their tears, and be comforted by the thought that you are the children of God, and that you are going to a Father that loves you better than they. If, on the contrary, you slight and despise their instructions, and suffer your youth to run waste, you will do much to imbitter their happiness and shorten their days. Many parents have gone to the grave broken-hearted by the ingratitude, perverseness, impiety and licentiousness of their children. My young friends, listen seriously to parental admonition. Beware, lest you pierce with anguish that breast on which you have so often leaned. Beware, lest by early contempt of instruction, you bring yourselves to shame and misery in this world, and draw on your heads still heavier ruin in the world beyond the grave.

Children, I have now set before you your duties. Let me once more beseech you to honour your father and mother. Ever cling to them with confidence and love. Be to them an honour, an ornament, a solace, and a support. Be more than they expect, and if possible be all that they desire. To you they are now looking with an affection which trembles for your safety. So live, that their eyes may ever fix on you with beams of hope and joy. So live, that there collection of you may soothe their last hours. May you now walk by their side in the steps of the holy Saviour, and through his grace may you meet again in a better and happier world. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

ON THE ORDINATION OF THE REV. FREDERICK A. FARLEY,

AS PASTOR OF THE WESTMINSTER CONGREGATIONAL SOCIETY, IN PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

SEPTEMBER 10th, 1828.

"*Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.*"

EPHESIANS, v. 1.

To promote true religion is the purpose of the Christian ministry. For this it was ordained. On the present occasion, therefore, when a new teacher is to be given to the church, a discourse on the character of true religion will not be inappropriate. I do not mean, that I shall attempt, in the limits to which I am now confined, to set before you all its properties, signs, and operations; for in so doing I should burden your memories with divisions and vague generalities, as uninteresting as they would be unprofitable. My purpose is, to select one view of the subject, which seems to me of primary dignity and importance; and I select this, because it is greatly neglected, and because I attribute to this neglect much of the inefficacy, and many of the corruptions of religion.

The text calls us to follow or imitate God, to seek accordance with or likeness to him; and to do this, not fearfully and faintly, but with the spirit and hope of beloved children. The doctrine which I propose to illustrate, is derived immediately from these words, and is incorporated with the whole New Testament. I affirm, and would maintain, that true religion consists in proposing as our great end, a growing likeness to the Supreme Being. Its noblest influence consists, in making us more and more partakers of the Divinity. For this it is to be preached. Religious instruction should aim chiefly to turn men's aspirations and efforts to that perfection of the soul, which constitutes it a bright image of God. Such is the topic now to be discussed: and I implore Him, whose glory I seek, to aid me in unfolding and enforcing it with simplicity and clearness, with a calm and pure zeal, and with unfeigned charity.

I begin with observing, what all indeed will understand, that the likeness to God, of which I propose to speak, belongs to man's higher or spiritual nature. It has its foundation in the original and essential capacities of the mind. In proportion as these are unfolded by right and vigorous exertion, it is extended and brightened. In proportion as these lie dormant, it is obscured. In proportion as they are perverted and overpowered by the appetites and passions, it is blotted out. In truth, moral evil, if unresisted and habitual, may so blight and lay

waste these capacities, that the image of God in man may seem to be wholly destroyed.

The importance of this assimilation to our Creator, is a topic, which needs no laboured discussion. All men, of whatever name, or sect, or opinion, will meet me on this ground. All, I presume, will allow, that no good in the compass of the universe, or within the gift of Omnipotence, can be compared to a resemblance of God, or to a participation of his attributes. I fear no contradiction here. Likeness to God is the supreme gift. He can communicate nothing so precious, glorious, blessed as himself. To hold intellectual and moral affinity with the Supreme Being, to partake his spirit, to be his children by derivations of kindred excellence, to bear a growing conformity to the perfection which we adore,—this is a felicity which obscures and annihilates all other good.

It is only in proportion to this likeness that we can enjoy either God, or the universe. That God can be known and enjoyed only through sympathy or kindred attributes, is a doctrine which even Gentile philosophy discerned. That the pure in heart can alone see and commune with the pure Divinity, was the sublime instruction of ancient sages as well as of inspired prophets. It is indeed the lesson of daily experience. To understand a great and good being, we must have the seeds of the same excellence. How quickly, by what an instinct, do accordant minds recognise one another! No attrac-

tion is so powerful as that which subsists between the truly wise, and good; whilst the brightest excellence is lost on those who have nothing congenial in their own breasts. God becomes a real being to us, in proportion as his own nature is unfolded within us. To a man who is growing in the likeness of God, faith begins even here to change into vision. He carries within himself a proof of a Deity, which can only be understood by experience. He more than believes, he feels the divine presence; and gradually rises to an intercourse with his Maker, to which it is not irreverent to apply the name of friendship and intimacy. The apostle John intended to express this truth, when he tells us that he, in whom a principle of divine charity or benevolence has become a habit and life, "dwells in God, and God in him."

It is plain, too, that likeness to God is the true and only preparation for the enjoyment of the universe. In proportion as we approach and resemble the mind of God, we are brought into harmony with the creation; for, in that proportion we possess the principles from which the universe sprung; we carry within ourselves the perfections of which its beauty, magnificence, order, benevolent adaptations, and boundless purposes, are the results and manifestations. God unfolds himself in his works to a kindred mind. It is possible, that the brevity of these hints may expose to the charge of mysticism, what seems to me the calmest and clearest truth.

I think, however, that every reflecting man will feel, that likeness to God must be a principle of sympathy or accordance with his creation; for the creation is a birth and shining forth of the Divine Mind, a work through which his spirit breathes. In proportion as we receive this spirit, we possess within ourselves the explanation of what we see. We discern more and more of God in every thing, from the frail flower to the everlasting stars. Even in evil, that dark cloud which hangs over the creation, we discern rays of light and hope, and gradually come to see in suffering and temptation, proofs and instruments of the sublimest purposes of Wisdom and Love.

I have offered these very imperfect views, that I may show the great importance of the doctrine which I am solicitous to enforce. I would teach, that likeness to God is a good so unutterably surpassing all other good, that whoever admits it as attainable, must acknowledge it to be the chief aim of life. I would show that the highest and happiest office of religion, is to bring the mind into growing accordance with God, and that by the tendency of religious systems to this end their truth and worth are to be chiefly tried.

I am aware that it may be said, that the Scriptures, in speaking of man as made in the image of God, and in calling us to imitate him, use bold and figurative language. It may be said, that there is

danger from too literal an interpretation; that God is an unapproachable being; that I am not warranted in ascribing to man a like nature to the Divine; that we and all things illustrate the Creator by contrast, not by resemblance; that religion manifests itself chiefly in convictions and acknowledgments of utter worthlessness; and that to talk of the greatness and divinity of the human soul, is to inflate that pride through which Satan fell, and through which man involves himself in that fallen spirit's ruin.

I answer, that, to me, scripture and reason hold a different language. In Christianity particularly, I meet perpetual testimonies to the divinity of human nature. This whole religion expresses an infinite concern of God for the human soul, and teaches that he deems no methods too expensive for its recovery and exaltation. Christianity, with one voice, calls me to turn my regards and care to the spirit within me, as of more worth than the whole outward world. It calls us to "be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect;" and everywhere, in the sublimity of its precepts, it implies and recognises the sublime capacities of the being to whom they are addressed. It assures us that human virtue is "in the sight of God of great price," and speaks of the return of a human being to virtue as an event which increases the joy of heaven. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the brightness of his glory, the express and unsullied image

of the Divinity, is seen mingling with men as a friend and brother, offering himself as their example, and promising to his true followers a share in all his splendours and joys. In the New Testament, God is said to communicate his own spirit, and all his fulness to the human soul. In the New Testament man is exhorted to aspire after "honour, glory, and immortality;" and Heaven, a word expressing the nearest approach to God, and a divine happiness, is everywhere proposed as the end of his being. In truth, the very essence of Christian faith is, that we trust in God's mercy, as revealed in Jesus Christ, for a state of celestial purity, in which we shall grow forever in the likeness, and knowledge, and enjoyment of the Infinite Father. Lofty views of the nature of man are bound up and interwoven with the whole Christian system. Say not, that these are at war with humility; for who was ever humbler than Jesus, and yet who ever possessed such a consciousness of greatness and divinity? Say not, that man's business is to think of his sin, and not of his dignity; for great sin implies a great capacity; it is the abuse of a noble nature; and no man can be deeply and rationally contrite, but he who feels, that in wrong-doing he has resisted a divine voice, and warred against a divine principle, in his own soul.—I need not, I trust, pursue the argument from revelation. There is an argument from nature and reason, which seems to me so convincing, and is at the same time so fitted to explain what I mean by

man's possession of a like nature to God, that I shall pass at once to its exposition.

That man has a kindred nature with God, and may bear most important and ennobling relations to him, seems to me to be established by a striking proof. This proof you will understand, by considering, for a moment, how we obtain our ideas of God. Whence come the conceptions which we include under that august name? Whence do we derive our knowledge of the attributes and perfections which constitute the Supreme Being? I answer, we derive them from our own souls. The divine attributes are first developed in ourselves, and thence transferred to our Creator. The idea of God, sublime and awful as it is, is the idea of our own spiritual nature, purified and enlarged to infinity. In ourselves are the elements of the Divinity. God then does not sustain a figurative resemblance to man. It is the resemblance of a parent to a child, the likeness of a kindred nature.

We call God a Mind. He has revealed himself as a spirit. But what do we know of mind, but through the unfolding of this principle in our own breasts? That unbounded spiritual energy which we call God, is conceived by us only through consciousness, through the knowledge of ourselves.—We ascribe thought or intelligence to the Deity as one of his most glorious attributes. And what means this language? These terms we have framed to express operations or faculties of our own souls.

The Infinite Light would be forever hidden from us, did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us. God is another name for human intelligence, raised above all error and imperfection, and extended to all possible truth.

The same is true of God's goodness. How do we understand this, but by the principle of love implanted in the human breast? Whence is it, that this divine attribute is so faintly comprehended, but from the feeble development of it in the multitude of men? Who can understand the strength, purity, fulness, and extent of divine philanthropy, but he in whom selfishness has been swallowed up in love?

The same is true of all the moral perfections of the Deity. These are comprehended by us, only through our own moral nature. It is conscience within us, which, by its approving and condemning voice, interprets to us God's love of virtue and hatred of sin; and without conscience these glorious conceptions would never have opened on the mind. It is the lawgiver in our own breasts, which gives us the idea of divine authority, and binds us to obey it. The soul, by its sense of right, or its perception of moral distinctions, is clothed with sovereignty over itself, and through this alone, it understands and recognises the Sovereign of the Universe. Men, as by a natural inspiration, have agreed to speak of conscience as the voice of God, as the Divinity within us. This principle, reverently

obeyed, makes us more and more partakers of the moral perfection of the Supreme Being, of that very excellence, which constitutes the rightfulness of his sceptre, and enthrones him over the universe. Without this inward law, we should be as incapable of receiving a law from Heaven as the brute. Without this, the thunders of Sinai might startle the outward ear, but would have no meaning, no authority to the mind. I have expressed here a great truth. Nothing teaches so encouragingly our relation and resemblance to God; for the glory of the Supreme Being is eminently moral. We blind ourselves to his chief splendour if we think only or mainly of his power, and overlook those attributes of rectitude and goodness to which he subjects his omnipotence, and which are the foundations and very substance of his universal and immutable Law. And are these attributes revealed to us through the principles and convictions of our own souls? Do we understand through sympathy God's perception of the right, the good, the holy, the just? Then with what propriety is it said, that in his own image he made man!

I am aware, that it may be objected to these views, that we receive our idea of God from the universe, from his works, and not so exclusively from our own souls. The universe, I know, is full of God. The heavens and earth declare his glory. In other words, the effects and signs of power, wisdom, and goodness, are apparent through the whole creation. But apparent to what? Not to the outward eye;

not to the acutest organs of sense; but to a kindred mind, which interprets the universe by itself. It is only through that energy of thought, by which we adapt various and complicated means to distant ends, and give harmony and a common bearing to multiplied exertions, that we understand the creative intelligence which has established the order, dependencies and harmony of nature. We see God around us, because he dwells within us. It is by a kindred wisdom that we discern his wisdom in his works. The brute, with an eye as piercing as ours, looks on the universe; and the page, which to us is radiant with characters of greatness and goodness, is to him a blank. In truth, the beauty and glory of God's works are revealed to the mind by a light beaming from itself. We discern the impress of God's attributes in the universe by accordance of nature, and enjoy them through sympathy.—I hardly need observe, that these remarks in relation to the universe apply with equal, if not greater force, to revelation.

I shall now be met by another objection, which to many may seem strong. It will be said, that these various attributes of which I have spoken, exist in God in Infinite Perfection, and that this destroys all affinity between the human and the divine mind. To this I have two replies. In the first place, an attribute, by becoming perfect, does not part with its essence. Love, wisdom, power, and purity, do not change their nature by enlargement. If they did, we should lose the Supreme Being through his very

infinity. Our ideas of him would fade away into mere sounds. For example, if wisdom in God, because unbounded, have no affinity with that attribute in man, why apply to him that term? It must signify nothing. Let me ask what we mean, when we say that we discern the marks of intelligence in the universe? We mean, that we meet there the proofs of a mind like our own. We certainly discern proofs of no other; so that to deny this doctrine, would be to deny the evidences of a God, and utterly to subvert the foundations of religious belief. What man can examine the structure of a plant or an animal, and see the adaptation of its parts to each other and to common ends, and not feel, that it is the work of an intelligence akin to his own, and that he traces these marks of design by the same spiritual energy in which they had their origin?

But I would offer another answer to this objection, that God's infinity places him beyond the resemblance and approach of man. I affirm, and I trust that I do not speak too strongly, that there are traces of infinity in the human mind, and that in this very respect, it bears a likeness to God. The very conception of infinity is the mark of a nature, to which no limit can be prescribed. This thought indeed comes to us not so much from abroad, as from our own souls. We ascribe this attribute to God, because we possess capacities and wants, which only an unbounded being can fill, and because we are conscious of a tendency in spiritual

faculties to unlimited expansion. We believe in the divine infinity through something congenial with it in our own breasts. I hope I speak clearly, and if not, I would ask those to whom I am obscure, to pause before they condemn. To me it seems that the soul, in all its higher actions, in original thought, in the creations of genius, in the soarings of imagination, in its love of beauty and grandeur, in its aspirations after a pure and unknown joy, and especially in disinterestedness, in the spirit of self-sacrifice, and in enlightened devotion, has a character of infinity. There is often a depth in human love which may be strictly called unfathomable. There is sometimes a lofty strength in moral principle, which all the power of the outward universe cannot overcome. There seems a might within which can more than balance all might without. There is, too, a piety, which swells into a transport too vast for utterance, and into an immeasurable joy. I am speaking indeed of what is uncommon, but still of realities. We see, however, the tendency of the soul to the infinite in more familiar and ordinary forms. Take for example the delight which we find in the vast scenes of nature, in prospects which spread around us without limits, in the immensity of the heavens and the ocean, and especially in the rush and roar of mighty winds, waves, and torrents, when, midst our deep awe, a power within seems to respond to the omnipotence around us. The same principle is seen in the delight ministered to

us by works of fiction or of imaginative art, in which our own nature is set before us in more than human beauty and power. In truth, the soul is always bursting its limits. It thirsts continually for wider knowledge. It rushes forward to untried happiness. It has a deep want which nothing limited can appease. Its true element and end is an unbounded good. Thus God's infinity has its image in the soul, and through the soul, much more than through the universe, we arrive at this conception of the Deity.

In these remarks I have spoken strongly. But I have no fear of expressing too strongly the connexion between the divine and the human mind. My only fear is, that I shall dishonour the great subject. The danger to which we are most exposed, is that of severing the Creator from his creatures. The propensity of human sovereigns to cut off communication between themselves and their subjects, and to disclaim a common nature with their inferiors, has led the multitude of men, who think of God chiefly under the character of a king, to conceive of him as a being, who places his glory in multiplying distinctions between himself and all other beings. The truth is, that the union between the Creator and the creature surpasses all other bonds in strength and intimacy. He penetrates all things, and delights to irradiate all with his glory. Nature, in its lowest and inanimate forms, is pervaded by his power; and when quickened by the

mysterious property of life, how wonderfully does it show forth the perfections of its Author! How much of God may be seen in the structure of a single leaf, which, though so frail as to tremble in every wind, yet holds connexions and living communications with the earth, the air, the clouds, and the distant sun; and, through these sympathies with the universe, is itself a revelation of an omnipotent mind. God delights to diffuse himself everywhere. Through his energy, unconscious matter clothes itself with proportions, powers, and beauties, which reflect his wisdom and love. How much more must he delight to frame conscious and happy recipients of his perfections, in whom his wisdom and love may substantially dwell, with whom he may form spiritual ties, and to whom he may be an everlasting spring of moral energy and happiness. How far the Supreme Being may communicate his attributes to his intelligent offspring, I stop not to inquire. But that his almighty goodness will impart to them powers and glories, of which the material universe is but a faint emblem, I cannot doubt. That the soul, if true to itself and its Maker, will be filled with God, and will manifest him, more than that sun, I cannot doubt. Who can doubt it, that believes and understands the doctrine of human immortality?

The views which I have given in this discourse respecting man's participation of the divine nature, seem to me to receive strong confirmation, from the title or relation most frequently applied to God

in the New Testament; and I have reserved this as the last corroboration of this doctrine, because to my own mind it is singularly affecting. In the New Testament God is made known to us as a Father, and a brighter feature of that book cannot be named. Our worship is to be directed to him as our Father. Our whole religion is to take its character from this view of the Divinity. In this he is to rise always to our minds. And what is it to be a Father? It is to communicate one's own nature, to give life to kindred beings; and the highest function of a Father is to educate the mind of the child, and to impart to it what is noblest and happiest in his own mind. God is our Father, not merely because he created us, or because he gives us enjoyment; for he created the flower and the insect, yet we call him not their Father. This bond is a spiritual one. This name belongs to God, because he frames spirits like himself, and delights to give them what is most glorious and blessed in his own nature. Accordingly Christianity is said with special propriety, to reveal God as the Father, because it reveals him as sending his Son, to cleanse the mind from every stain, and to replenish it forever with the spirit and moral attributes of its Author. Separate from God this idea of his creating and training up beings after his own likeness, and you rob him of the paternal character. This relation vanishes, and with it, vanish the glory of the Gospel, and the dearest hopes of the human soul.

The great use which I would make of the principles laid down in this discourse, is to derive from them just and clear views of the nature of religion. What then is religion? I answer; it is not the adoration of a God, with whom we have no common properties; of a distinct, foreign, separate being; but of an all-communicating Parent. It recognises and adores God as a being, whom we know through our own souls, who has made man in his own image, who is the perfection of our own spiritual nature, who has sympathies with us as kindred beings, who is near us, not in place only like this all-surrounding atmosphere, but by spiritual influence and love, who looks on us with parental interest, and whose great design it is to communicate to us forever, and in freer and fuller streams, his own power, goodness, and joy. The conviction of this near and ennobling relation of God to the soul, and of his great purposes towards it, belongs to the very essence of true religion; and true religion manifests itself chiefly and most conspicuously in desires, hopes, and efforts corresponding to this truth. It desires and seeks supremely the assimilation of the mind to God, or the perpetual unfolding and enlargement of those powers and virtues by which it is constituted his glorious image. The mind, in proportion as it is enlightened and penetrated by true religion, thirsts and labours for a godlike elevation. What else indeed can it seek, if this good be placed within its reach? If I am capable of receiving and reflecting

the intellectual and moral glory of my Creator, what else in comparison shall I desire? Shall I deem a property in the outward universe as the highest good, when I may become partaker of the very mind from which it springs, of the prompting love, the disposing wisdom, the quickening power, through which its order, beauty, and beneficent influences subsist? True religion is known by these high aspirations, hopes, and efforts. And this is the religion which most truly honours God. To honour him, is not to tremble before him as an unapproachable sovereign, nor to utter barren praise which leaves us as it found us. It is to become what we praise. It is to approach God as an inexhaustible Fountain of light, power, and purity. It is to feel the quickening and transforming energy of his perfections. It is to thirst for the growth and invigoration of the divine principle within us. It is to seek the very spirit of God. It is to trust in, to bless, to thank him for that rich grace, mercy, love, which was revealed and proffered by Jesus Christ, and which proposes as its great end the perfection of the human soul.

I regard this view of religion as infinitely important. It does more than all things to make our connexion with our Creator ennobling and happy; and in proportion as we want it, there is danger that the thought of God may itself become the instrument of our degradation. That religion has been so dispensed as to depress the human mind, I need

not tell you; and it is a truth, which ought to be known, that the greatness of the Deity, when separated in our thoughts from his parental character, especially tends to crush human energy and hope. To a frail dependent creature, an omnipotent Creator easily becomes a terror, and his worship easily degenerates into servility, flattery, self-contempt, and selfish calculation. Religion only ennobles us, in as far as it reveals to us the tender and intimate connexion of God with his creatures, and teaches us to see in the very greatness which might give alarm, the source of great and glorious communications to the human soul. You cannot, my hearers, think too highly of the majesty of God. But let not this majesty sever him from you. Remember, that his greatness is the infinity of attributes which yourselves possess. Adore his infinite wisdom; but remember that this wisdom rejoices to diffuse itself, and let an exhilarating hope spring up, at the thought of the immeasurable intelligence which such a Father must communicate to his children. In like manner adore his power. Let the boundless creation fill you with awe and admiration of the energy which sustains it. But remember, that God has a nobler work than the outward creation, even the spirit within yourselves; and that it is his purpose to replenish this with his own energy, and to crown it with growing power and triumphs over the material universe. Above all, adore his unutterable goodness. But remember, that this attribute is par-

ticularly proposed to you as your model; that God calls you, both by nature and revelation, to a fellowship in his philanthropy; that he has placed you in social relations for the very end of rendering you ministers and representatives of his benevolence; that he even summons you to espouse and to advance the sublimest purpose of his goodness, the redemption of the human race, by extending the knowledge and power of Christian truth. It is through such views, that religion raises up the soul, and binds man by ennobling bonds to his Maker.

To complete my views of this topic, I beg to add an important caution. I have said that the great work of religion is to conform ourselves to God, or to unfold the divine likeness within us. Let none infer from this language, that I place religion in unnatural effort, in straining after excitements which do not belong to the present state, or in anything separate from the clear and simple duties of life. I exhort you to no extravagance. I reverence human nature too much to do it violence. I see too much divinity in its ordinary operations, to urge on it a forced and vehement virtue. To grow in the likeness of God, we need not cease to be men. This likeness does not consist in extraordinary or miraculous gifts, in supernatural additions to the soul, or in anything foreign to our original constitution; but in our essential faculties, unfolded by vigorous and conscientious exertion in the ordinary circumstances assigned by God. To resemble our Creator,

we need not fly from society, and entrance ourselves in lonely contemplation and prayer. Such processes might give a feverish strength to one class of emotions, but would result in disproportion, distortion, and sicklincss of mind. Our proper work is to approach God by the free and natural unfolding of our highest powers, of understanding, conscience, love, and the moral will.

Shall I be told that by such language I ascribe to nature the effects which can only be wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit? I anticipate this objection, and wish to meet it by a simple exposition of my views. I would on no account disparage the gracious aids and influences which God imparts to the human soul. The promise of the Holy Spirit is among the most precious in the sacred volume. Worlds could not tempt me to part with the doctrine of God's intimate connection with the mind, and of his free and full communications to it. But these views are in no respect at variance with what I have taught of the method, by which we are to grow in the likeness of God. Scripture and experience concur in teaching, that by the Holy Spirit, we are to understand a divine assistance adapted to our moral freedom, and accordant with the fundamental truth, that virtue is the mind's own work. By the Holy Spirit, I understand an aid, which must be gained and made effectual by our own activity; an aid, which no more interferes with our faculties, than the assistance which we receive from

our fellow beings; an aid, which silently mingles and conspires with all other helps and means of goodness; an aid, by which we unfold our natural powers in a natural order, and by which we are strengthened to understand and apply the resources derived from our munificent Creator. This aid we cannot prize too much, or pray for too earnestly. But wherein, let me ask, does it war with the doctrine, that God is to be approached by the exercise and unfolding of our highest powers and affections, in the ordinary circumstances of human life?

I repeat it, to resemble our Maker we need not quarrel with nature or our lot. Our present state, made up, as it is, of aids and trials, is worthy of God, and may be used throughout to assimilate us to him. For example, our domestic ties, the relations of neighbourhood and country, the daily interchanges of thoughts and feelings, the daily occasions of kindness, the daily claims of want and suffering,—these and the other circumstances of our social state, form the best sphere and school for that benevolence, which is God's brightest attribute; and we should make a sad exchange, by substituting for these natural aids, any self-invented artificial means of sanctity. Christianity, our great guide to God, never leads us away from the path of nature, and never wars with the unsophisticated dictates of conscience. We approach our Creator by every right exertion of the powers he gives us. Whenever we invigorate the understanding by ho-

nestly and resolutely seeking truth, and by withstanding whatever might warp the judgment; whenever we invigorate the conscience by following it in opposition to the passions; whenever we receive a blessing gratefully, bear a trial patiently, or encounter peril or scorn with moral courage; whenever we perform a disinterested deed; whenever we lift up the heart in true adoration to God; whenever we war against a habit or desire which is strengthening itself against our higher principles; whenever we think, speak, or act, with moral energy, and resolute devotion to duty, be the occasion ever so humble, obscure, familiar, then the divinity is growing within us, and we are ascending towards our Author. True religion thus blends itself with common life. We are thus to draw nigh to God, without forsaking men. We are thus, without parting with our human nature, to clothe ourselves with the divine.

My views on the great subject of this discourse have now been given. I shall close with a brief consideration of a few objections, in the course of which I shall offer some views of the Christian ministry, which this occasion and the state of the world seem to me to demand.—I anticipate from some an objection to this discourse, drawn as they will say from experience. I may be told, that I have talked of the godlike capacities of human nature, and have spoken of man as a divinity; and where,

it will be asked, are the warrants of this high estimate of our race? I may be told that I dream, and that I have peopled the world with the creatures of my lonely imagination. What! Is it only in dreams, that beauty and loveliness have beamed on me from the human countenance, that I have heard tones of kindness, which have thrilled through my heart, that I have found sympathy in suffering, and a sacred joy in friendship? Are all the great and good men of past ages only dreams? Are such names as Moses, Socrates, Paul, Alfred, Milton, only the fictions of my disturbed slumbers? Are the great deeds of history, the discoveries of philosophy, the creations of genius, only visions? Oh! no. I do not dream when I speak of the divine capacities of human nature. It was a real page in which I read of patriots and martyrs, of Fenelon and Howard, of Hampden and Washington. And tell me not that these were prodigies, miracles, immeasurably separated from their race; for their very reverence, which has treasured up and hallowed their memories, the very sentiments of admiration and love with which their names are now heard, show that the principles of their greatness are diffused through all your breasts. The germs of sublime virtue are scattered liberally on our earth. How often have I seen in the obscurity of domestic life, a strength of love, of endurance, of pious trust, of virtuous resolution, which in a public sphere would have attracted public homage. I cannot but pity the man, who recognises

nothing godlike in his own nature. I see the marks of God in the heavens and the earth; but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong, and which never despairs of the cause of Christ and human virtue. I do and I must reverence human nature. Neither the sneers of a worldly scepticism, nor the groans of a gloomy theology, disturb my faith in its godlike powers and tendencies. I know how it is despised, how it has been oppressed, how civil and religious establishments have for ages conspired to crush it. I know its history. I shut my eyes on none of its weaknesses and crimes. I understand the proofs, by which despotism demonstrates that man is a wild beast, in want of a master, and only safe in chains. But injured, trampled on, and scorned as our nature is, I still turn to it with intense sympathy and strong hope. The signatures of its origin and its end are impressed too deeply to be ever wholly effaced. I bless it for its kind affections, for its strong and tender love. I honour it for its struggles against oppression, for its growth and progress under the weight of so many chains and prejudices, for its achievements in science and art, and still more for its examples of heroic and saintly virtue. These are marks of a divine origin and the pledges of a celestial inheritance; and I thank God that my own lot is bound up with that of the human race.

But another objection starts up. It may be said,

"Allow these views to be true; are they fitted for the pulpit? fitted to act on common minds? They may be prized by men of cultivated intellect and taste; but can the multitude understand them? Will the multitude feel them? On whom has a minister to act? On men immersed in business, and buried in the flesh; on men whose whole power of thought has been spent on pleasure or gain; on men chained by habit and wedded to sin. Sooner may adamant be riven by a child's touch, than the human heart be pierced by refined and elevated sentiment. Gross instruments will alone act on gross minds. Men sleep, and nothing but thunder, nothing but flashes from the everlasting fire of hell, will thoroughly wake them."

I have all along felt that such objections would be made to the views I have urged. But they do not move me. I answer, that I think these views singularly adapted to the pulpit, and I think them full of power. The objection is that they are *refined*. But I see God accomplishing his noblest purposes by what may be called refined means. All the great agents of nature,—attraction, heat, and the principle of life,—are refined, spiritual, invisible; acting gently, silently, imperceptibly: and yet brute matter feels their power, and is transformed by them into surpassing beauty. The electric fluid, unseen, unfelt, and everywhere diffused, is infinitely more efficient, and ministers to infinitely nobler productions, than when it breaks forth in thunder. Much less can I

believe, that in the moral world, noise, menace, and violent appeals to gross passions, to fear and selfishness, are God's chosen means of calling forth spiritual life, beauty, and greatness. It is seldom that human nature throws off all susceptibility of grateful and generous impressions, all sympathy with superior virtue: and here are springs and principles to which a generous teaching, if simple, sincere, and fresh from the soul, may confidently appeal.

It is said, men cannot *understand* the views which seem to me so precious. This objection I am anxious to repel, for the common intellect has been grievously kept down and wronged through the belief of its incapacity. The pulpit would do more good, were not the mass of men looked upon and treated as children. Happily for the race, the time is passing away in which intellect was thought the monopoly of a few, and the majority were given over to hopeless ignorance. Science is leaving her solitudes to enlighten the multitude. How much more may religious teachers take courage to speak to men on subjects which are nearer to them than the properties and laws of matter, I mean their own souls. The multitude, you say, want capacity to receive the great truths relating to their spiritual nature. But what, let me ask you, is the Christian religion? A spiritual system, intended to turn men's minds upon themselves; to frame them to watchfulness over thought, imagination, and passion; to establish them in an intimacy with their own souls.

What are all the Christian virtues, which men are exhorted to love and seek? I answer, pure and high motions or determinations of the mind. That refinement of thought which, I am told, transcends the common intellect, belongs to the very essence of Christianity. In confirmation of these views, the human mind seems to me to be turning itself more and more inward, and to be growing more alive to its own worth, and its capacities of progress. The spirit of education shows this, and so does the spirit of freedom. There is a spreading conviction that man was made for a higher purpose than to be a beast of burden, or a creature of sense. The Divinity is stirring within the human breast, and demanding a culture and a liberty worthy of the child of God. Let religious teaching correspond to this advancement of the mind. Let it rise above the technical, obscure, and frigid theology which has come down to us from times of ignorance, superstition, and slavery. Let it penetrate the human soul, and reveal it to itself. No preaching, I believe, is so intelligible as that which is true to human nature, and helps men to read their own spirits.

But the objection which I have stated not only represents men as incapable of understanding, but still more of being moved, quickened, sanctified, and saved, by such views as I have given. If by this objection nothing more is meant, than that these views are not alone or of themselves sufficient, I

shall not dispute it; for true and glorious as they are, they do not constitute the whole truth, and I do not expect great moral effects from narrow and partial views of our nature. I have spoken of the godlike capacities of the soul. But other and very different elements enter into the human being. Man has animal propensities as well as intellectual and moral powers. He has a body as well as mind. He has passions to war with reason, and self-love with conscience. He is a free being and a tempted being, and, thus constituted, he may and does sin, and often sins grievously. To such a being, religion, or virtue, is a conflict, requiring great spiritual effort, put forth in habitual watchfulness and prayer; and all the motives are needed, by which force and constancy may be communicated to the will. I exhort not the preacher, to talk perpetually of man as "made but a little lower than the angels." I would not narrow him to any class of topics. Let him adapt himself to our whole and various nature. Let him summon to his aid all the powers of this world, and the world to come. Let him bring to bear on the conscience and the heart, God's milder and more awful attributes; the promises and threatenings of the divine word, the lessons of history, the warnings of experience. Let the wages of sin here and hereafter be taught clearly and earnestly. But amidst the various motives to spiritual effort, which belong to the minister, none are more quickening than those drawn from the soul itself, and from God's

desire and purpose to exalt it, by every aid consistent with its freedom. These views I conceive are to mix with all others, and without them all others fail to promote a generous virtue. Is it said, that the minister's proper work is, to preach Christ, and not the dignity of human nature? I answer, that Christ's greatness is manifested in the greatness of the nature which he was sent to redeem; and that his chief glory consists in this, that he came to restore God's image where it was obscured or effaced, and to give an everlasting impulse and life to what is divine within us. Is it said, that the malignity of sin is to be the minister's great theme? I answer, that this malignity can only be understood and felt, when sin is viewed as the ruin of God's noblest work, as darkening a light brighter than the sun, as carrying discord, bondage, disease, and death, into a mind framed for perpetual progress towards its Author. Is it said, that terror is the chief instrument of saving the soul? I answer, that if by terror, be meant a rational and moral fear, a conviction and dread of the unutterable evil incurred by a mind which wrongs, betrays, and destroys itself, then I am the last to deny its importance. But a fear like this, which regards the debasement of the soul as the greatest of evils, is plainly founded upon and proportioned to our conceptions of the greatness of our nature. The more common terror, excited by vivid images of torture and bodily pain, is a very questionable means of virtue. When strongly

awakened, it generally injures the character, breaks men into cowards and slaves, brings the intellect to cringe before human authority, makes man abject before his Maker, and, by a natural reaction of the mind, often terminates in a presumptuous confidence, altogether distinct from virtuous self-respect, and singularly hostile to the unassuming, charitable spirit of Christianity. The preacher should rather strive to fortify the soul against physical pains, than to bow it to their mastery, teaching it to dread nothing in comparison with sin, and to dread sin as the ruin of a noble nature.

Men, I repeat it, are to be quickened and raised by appeals to their highest principles. Even the convicts of a prison may be touched by kindness, generosity, and especially by a tone, look, and address, expressing hope and respect for their nature. I know, that the doctrine of ages has been, that terror, restraint, and bondage are the chief safeguards of human virtue and peace. But we have begun to learn that affection, confidence, respect, and freedom are mightier as well as nobler agents. Men *can* be wrought upon by generous influences. I would that this truth were better understood by religious teachers. From the pulpit, generous influences too seldom proceed. In the church, men too seldom hear a voice to quicken and exalt them. Religion, speaking through her public organs, seems often to forget her natural tone of elevation. The character of God, the principles of his government,

his relations to the human family, the purposes for which he brought us into being, the nature which he has given us, and the condition in which he has placed us,—these and the like topics, though the sublimest which can enter the mind, are not unfrequently so set forth as to narrow and degrade the hearers, dishearten and oppressing with gloom the timid and sensitive, and infecting coarser minds with the unhallowed spirit of intolerance, presumption, and exclusive pretension to the favour of God. I know, and rejoice to know, that preaching in its worst forms does good; for so bright and piercing is the light of Christianity, that it penetrates in a measure the thickest clouds in which men contrive to involve it. But that evil mixes with the good, I also know; and I should be unfaithful to my deep convictions, did I not say, that human nature requires for its elevation, more generous treatment from the teachers of religion.

I conclude with saying, Let the minister cherish a reverence for his own nature. Let him never despise it even in its most forbidding forms. Let him delight in its beautiful and lofty manifestations. Let him hold fast, as one of the great qualifications for his office, a faith in the greatness of the human soul, that faith, which looks beneath the perishing body, beneath the sweat of the labourer, beneath the rags and ignorance of the poor, beneath the vices of the sensual and selfish, and discerns in the depths of the soul a divine prin-

ciple, a ray of the Infinite Light, which may yet break forth and "shine as the sun" in the kingdom of God. Let him strive to awaken in men a consciousness of the heavenly treasure within them, a consciousness of possessing what is of more worth than the outward universe. Let hope give life to all his labours. Let him speak to men, as to beings liberally gifted, and made for God. Let him always look round on a congregation with the encouraging trust, that he has hearers prepared to respond to the simple, unaffected utterance of great truths, and to the noblest workings of his own mind. Let him feel deeply for those, in whom the divine nature is overwhelmed by the passions. Let him sympathize tenderly with those, in whom it begins to struggle, to mourn for sin, to thirst for a new life. Let him guide and animate to higher and diviner virtue those, in whom it has gained strength. Let him strive to infuse courage, enterprise, devout trust, and an inflexible will, into men's labours for their own perfection. In one word, let him cherish an unfaltering and growing faith in God as the Father and quickener of the human mind, and in Christ as its triumphant and immortal friend. That by such preaching he is to work miracles, I do not say. That he will rival in sudden and outward effects what is wrought by the preachers of a low and terrifying theology, I do not expect or desire. That all will be made better, I am far from believing. His office is to act on free beings, who after

all must determine themselves; who have power to withstand all foreign agency; who are to be saved, not by mere preaching, but by their own prayers and toil. Still I believe, that such a minister will be a benefactor beyond all praise to the human soul. I believe, and know, that on those, who will admit his influence, he will work deeply, powerfully, gloriously. His function is the sublimest under heaven; and his reward will be, a growing power of spreading truth, virtue, moral strength, love, and happiness, without limit, and without end.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

THE PROPOSITION FOR INCREASING THE MEANS OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

AT

THE UNIVERSITY IN CAMBRIDGE, U. S.

[*Published by direction of the Corporation of Harvard College.*]

DECEMBER 23, 1815.

As a proposition is now before the public for increasing the means of theological education at Harvard University, it is thought that a few observations on the subject may be acceptable to those who have not been able to give to it much attention, and whose aid and patronage may be solicited.

It may perhaps be asked by some, though I hope the question will be confined to a few, Why ought we to be so solicitous for the education of ministers? The answer is very obvious. The object of the ministry is peculiarly important. To the Christian minister are intrusted in a measure the dearest and most valuable interests of the human race. He is called to watch over the morals of society, and to awaken and cultivate the principles of piety and virtue in the hearts of individuals. He is set apart to dispense that religion, which, as we believe, came

from God, which was given to reform, exalt, and console us, and on the reception of which our immortal hopes depend. Ought we not to be solicitous for the improvement and preparation of those, by whom this religion is to be unfolded and enforced, and to whose influence our own minds and those of our children are to be so often exposed?

Our interest in a minister is very peculiar. He is to us what no other professional man can be. We want him not to transact our business and to receive a compensation; but to be our friend, our guide, an inmate in our families; to enter our houses in affliction; and to be able to give us light, admonition, and consolation in suffering, sickness, and the last hours of life.

Our connection with men of other professions is transient, accidental, rare. With a minister it is habitual. Once in the week, at least, we are to meet and sit under his instructions. We are to give up our minds in a measure to his influence, and to receive from him impressions on a subject, which more than all others concerns us, and with which our improvement and tranquillity through life and our future peace are most intimately connected.

We want the minister of religion to address our *understandings* with clearness; to extend and brighten our moral and religious conceptions; to throw light over the obscurities of the sacred volume; to assist us in repelling those doubts which

sometimes shake our convictions of Christian truth; and to establish us in a firm and rational belief.

We want him not only to address the understanding with clearness, but still more to speak to the *conscience* and *heart* with power: to force as it were our thoughts from the world, to rouse us from the slumbers of an unreflecting life, to exhibit religion in an interesting form, and to engage our affections on the side of duty. Such are the offices and aids which we need from a Christian minister. Who does not see in a moment that much preparation of the intellect and heart is required to render him successful in these high and generous labours?

These reasons for being interested in the education of ministers grow out of the nature and importance of religion. Another important remark is, that the state of our country demands that greater care than ever should be given to this object. It will not be denied, I presume, that this country is on the whole advancing in intelligence. The means of improvement are more liberally and more generally afforded to the young than in former times. A close connection subsists with the cultivated mind in other countries. A variety of institutions are awakening our powers and communicating a degree of general knowledge, which was not formerly diffused among us. Taste is more extensively cultivated, and the finest productions of polite literature find their way into many of our

families. Now in this state of things, in this increasing activity of intellect, there is peculiar need of an enlightened ministry. Religion should not be left to feeble and ignorant advocates, to men of narrow and unfurnished minds. Its ministers should be practical proofs, that it may be connected with the noblest improvements of the understanding; and they should be able to convert into weapons for its defence the discoveries of philosophy, and the speculations of genius. Religion must be adapted in its mode of exhibition to the state of society. The form in which we present it to the infant will not satisfy and interest the advanced understanding. In the same manner, if in a cultivated age religious instruction does not partake the general elevation, it will be slighted by the very minds whose influence it is most desirable to engage on the side of virtue and piety.

I have observed, that an enlightened age requires an enlightened ministry. On the other hand it may be observed, that an enlightened ministry is a powerful agent in continuing and accelerating the progress of light, of refinement, and of all social improvements. The limits of this essay will not admit the full development of this sentiment. I will only observe, that perhaps the most reflecting men are not aware how far a society is indebted for activity of intellect, delicacy of manners, and the strength of all its institutions, to the silent, subtle influence of the thoughts and feelings, which are

kept alive in the breasts of multitudes by religious instruction.

There is another most important consideration for promoting an enlightened ministry. Religious teachers there certainly *will be* of one description or another; and if men of well furnished minds cannot be found for this office, we shall be overwhelmed by the ignorant and fanatical. The human heart is disposed by its very nature to religious impressions, and it wants guidance, wants direction, wants the light and fervour of other minds, in this most interesting concern. Conscious of weakness, and delighting in excitement, it will follow the blindest guide, who speaks with confidence of his communications with God, rather than advance alone in the religious life. An enlightened ministry is the only barrier against fanaticism. Remove this, and popular enthusiasts would sweep away the multitude as with a torrent, would operate with an unresisted power on the ardent imagination of youth, and on the devotional susceptibility of woman, and would even prostrate cultivated minds, in which feeling is the most prominent trait. Few of us consider the proneness of the human heart to extravagance and fanaticism, or how much we are all indebted for our safety to the good sense and intellectual and religious improvement of ministers of religion.

Ignorant ministers are driven almost by necessity to fanaticism. Unable to interest their hearers by appeals to the understanding, and by clear and judi-

cious and affecting delineations of religion, they can only acquire and maintain the ascendancy which is so dear to them, by inflaming the passions, by exciting a distempered and ungoverned sensibility, and by perpetuating ignorance and error. Every man of observation must have seen melancholy illustrations of this truth, and what an argument does it afford in favour of an enlightened ministry!

Nothing more is needed to show the great interest which the community ought to feel in the education of young men for the ministry. But it will be asked, Are not our present means sufficient? Are not our pulpits filled with well furnished and enlightened teachers? Why seek to obtain additional aids for this important end? I answer, first, that a sufficient number of enlightened ministers is *not* trained for our pulpits. There is a demand beyond the supply, even if we look no further than this common-wealth; and if we look through the whole country, we shall see an immense tract of the spiritual vineyard uncultivated, and uncultivated for want of labourers. I answer in the second place, that whilst in our pulpits we have ministers whose gifts and endowments entitle them to respect, we yet need and ought to possess a more enlightened ministry. Many of our religious teachers will lament to us the deficiencies of their education; will lament that the narrowness of their circumstances compelled them to too early an entrance on their work; will lament that they were deprived, by the

imperfection of our institutions, of many aids which the preparation for the ministry requires. We have indeed many good ministers. But we ought to have better. We *may* have better. But unless we will sow more liberally, we cannot expect a richer harvest. The education of ministers decides very much their future character; and where this is incomplete, we must not expect to be blessed with powerful and impressive instruction. The sum is, we need an increase of the means of theological education.

But it will be asked, Why shall we advance funds for the education of ministers, rather than of physicians or lawyers? Why are such peculiar aids and encouragements needed for this profession? Will not the demand for ministers obtain a supply, just as the demand for every other species of talent? This reasoning is founded on a principle generally true, that demand creates a supply; but every general rule has its exceptions, and it is one of the highest offices of practical wisdom to discern the cases where the rule fails in its application.

All reasoning should give place to fact. Now it is an undeniable fact, that whilst the other learned professions in our country are crowded and overstocked, whilst the supply vastly surpasses the demand, the profession of the ministry is comparatively deserted, and candidates of respectable standing, instead of obtruding themselves in crowds, are often to be sought with a degree of care and difficulty.

The reason of this is to be found in the difference between the ministry and other professions. Other professions hold out the strong lures of profit and distinction. They appeal to the ambition, the love of gain, the desire of rising in the world, which are so operative on youthful minds. These lures are not, and ought not to be, exhibited by the ministry. This profession makes its chief appeal to the moral and religious feelings of the young, and we all know how much fainter these are than those which I have previously mentioned. Can we wonder then that the ministry is less crowded?

I proceed to another remark. The professions of law and medicine do not imperiously demand any high moral qualifications in those who embrace them. A young man, whose habits are not altogether pure, or whose character is marked by levity, may enter on the study of these professions, without incurring the reproach of impropriety or inconsistency of conduct. The ministry, on the other hand, demands not merely unexceptionable morals, but a sobriety and seriousness of mind, and a propensity to contemplative and devout habits, which are not the ordinary characteristics of that age, when a choice must be made of the business of life. On this account the number of the young, who are inclined by their own feelings and advised by others to enter the ministry, is comperatively small.

I am now led to another reflection, growing out of the last. The profession of the ministry has an aspect not inviting to the young. Youth is the period of animation and gaiety. But to the last observation of youth, there is a gloominess, a solemnity, a painful self-restraint belonging to the life of a minister. Even young men of pure morals, and of devotional susceptibility shrink from an employment, which they think will separate them from the world, and impose a rigorous discipline and painful circumspection. That path, which they would probably find most tranquil and most flowery, seems to them beset with thorns. Do we not see many obstructions to a sufficient supply of students of theology?

I now proceed to another most important consideration. We have seen that a large number of young men, whose tastes and feelings lead them to the ministry, is not to be expected. It is also a fact, and a very decisive fact, that those young men who possess these tastes and feelings, generally belong to families whose circumstances are confined, and whose means of educating their children are exceedingly narrow. The children of the rich, born to prospects of ease, and formed to gaiety if not licentiousness by indulgence, have little relish for the ministry. On the contrary, the sons of poorer families, whose circumstances impose great self restraint, whose collegiate education is their whole portion, and often demands their own, as well as

their parents, exertions, are naturally formed to greater seriousness and consideration, and to a willingness to meet the toils and uncertainties of the ministry. From this class of the young, the ministerial profession does accordingly receive its largest supplies. Do we not at once discover from this statement, that this profession demands from the community peculiar encouragement? Let me briefly repeat what I have said. From the nature of the ministry, a small proportion of the young are disposed or fitted to enter it, and of this small number a considerable part are unable to defray the expenses of their education; and yet the community has the highest possible interest in giving them the best education which the improvements of the age and the opulence of the country will admit." Is it not as clear as noon-day, that there ought to be provided liberal funds for this most valuable object?

Will it here be asked, why the candidate for the ministry cannot borrow money to defray the charges of his education? I answer, it is not always easy for him to borrow. Besides, debt is a most distressing incumbrance to a man who has a prospect of a salary so small, that, without exertions foreign to his profession, it will hardly support him. Can we wonder that the profession is declined in preference to such a burden?

Where this burden however is chosen, the effect is very unhappy, and the cause of religion is often

a sufferer. The candidate, unwilling to contract a larger debt than is indispensable to his object, hurries through his studies, and enters unfurnished and unprepared on the ministry. His first care is, as it should be, to free himself from his pecuniary obligations; and for this end he endeavours to unite some secular employment with his sacred calling. In this way the spirit of study and of his profession is damped. He forms negligent habits in his preparation for the pulpit, which he soon thinks are justified by the wants of a growing family. His imperfect education therefore is never completed. His mind remains stationary. A meagre library, which he is unable to enlarge, furnishes the weekly food for his flock, who are forced to subsist on an uninteresting repetition of the same dull thoughts. This is the melancholy history of too many who enter the ministry. Few young men among us are in fact sufficiently prepared; and the consequence is, that religious instruction is not what it should be. The community at large cannot perhaps understand how extensive a preparation the ministry requires. There is one idea, however, which should teach them, that it ought to be more extensive than that which is demanded for any other profession. A lawyer and physician begin their employment with a small number of clients or patients, and their practice is confined to the least important cases within their respective departments. They have therefore much leisure for preparation after entering

on their pursuits, and gradually rise into public notice. Not so the minister. He enters at once on the stage. All the duties of a parish immediately devolve upon him. His connection at the first moment extends to as large a number as he will ever be called to serve. His station is at first conspicuous. He is literally burdened and pressed with duties. The mere labour of composing as many sermons as are demanded of him, is enough to exhaust his time and strength. If then his education has been deficient, how is it to be repaired? Amidst these disadvantages, can we wonder that the mind loses its spring, and soon becomes satisfied by very humble productions. How important is it, that a good foundation should be laid, that the theological student should have time to accumulate some intellectual treasures, and that he should be trained under circumstances most suited to give him an unconquerable love of his profession, of study, and of the cause to which he is devoted!

These remarks, it is hoped, will show the importance of liberally endowing a theological institution. It now only remains to consider this subject in relation to Harvard University. A very mistaken opinion is sometimes expressed, that this University is sufficiently opulent to accomplish any object, without further public assistance. A more erroneous sentiment could not prevail. The funds of this institution are indeed respectable; but they are already appropriated by the donors, or required by

the general system of liberal education for the support of existing establishments, and very little can be furnished from its resources for the great end which has now been recommended*. The assistance afforded to students in theology is *very* limited, and *not one* Professorship has as yet been established expressly for aiding their preparation for the ministry †. The Hollis Professor of Divinity, and other Professors of the University, do indeed cheerfully contribute to this object, as far as their prescribed duties permit. But as their offices respect primarily the Un-

* The offices at the College are all necessary or useful, and these cannot be maintained without considerable assessment on the Students. Large expenditures recently, in building University Hall and in repairs of the other edifices, in making two new permanent establishments for instruction, a new Philosophy Room, and in an extension of the Chemical and Anatomical establishment at College, with losses during the unsettled state of public affairs, have made large deductions from the College funds. Of the liberal and important grant from the Legislature, a quarter part is by law to be applied to lessen the fees of tuition of a certain number of students. The other portion of this grant, received for the first two years and a half, is absorbed by the erection of the Massachusetts Medical College in Boston; and the receipts hereafter will be needed for the erection of one or more Colleges for the habitation of students, and for other valuable general purposes.

† A good deal has been recently done towards a supply of this deficiency, by the Dexter Foundation for Lectures and Dissertations on the Interpretation of the Scriptures; a donation of a township of land by Samuel Parkman, Esq. for a Theological Professor for Students in Divinity, and by the Professorship of Greek Literature. But in order to render what has been already done effectual, the additional means of education here suggested are essential.

der-graduates, they can render little service in proportion to the demands of this most important end.

Two Professorships are immediately wanted at the University. The first is a Professorship of Sacred Literature, designed to introduce Students to the original languages in which the Scriptures were written, and to the various sources of light and information, which are required to the interpretation of the Scriptures.

Another Professorship, still more necessary, should embrace for its objects sacred eloquence, and instruction in pastoral duty. It should be designed to instruct candidates for the ministry in the composition and delivery of sermons, and in the best methods of impressing the human mind, and to awaken an enlightened zeal and ardour in the performance of all the offices of ministerial life. What serious and reflecting man is not often reminded on the Sabbath of the painful truth, that some institution is needed to train our ministers for the impressive and effectual discharge of their duties! How much ability is lost, wasted, for want of the discipline which has now been recommended!

We want not only these Professorships. We want funds to enable our young men to devote a longer period to preparation for the ministry.

These additions to the establishments at Cambridge, especially the foundations for assisting Students in Divinity to reside there for a proper time, would secure to the community the full benefit of

the many advantages already possessed by the University for theological education, particularly its large and excellent library. How great a blessing will be conferred on the Church, if these aids are provided! We are apt to consider these as aids for students in theology. They are aids for ourselves, and for our children, who are to sit under the instruction of those, who may thus be trained, and who will be unspeakable gainers from our own bounty. The cause is our own and our children's. Let us not betray it by supineness, or a contracted mind.

It ought to be particularly observed, that the consequence of enlarging the theological funds of the University, will not be the communication of a sectarian character to that institution. The design is *not* to inculcate the peculiarities of any sect, but to place students of divinity under the most favourable circumstances, for inquiring for themselves into the doctrines of revelation.

It is not intended that the course of instruction given to the under-graduates shall be in any degree affected by the proposed extension of the theological department. The University, in consequence of this extension, will not become a theological college, any more than it became a medical college when the several medical professorships were founded. It is well known that in the distinguished universities of Europe, ample provision is made for preparing students for every profession. This, we trust, will be the glory of Harvard. We hope to see an In-

stitution for law, as well as for medicine and theology, so that thus our *alma mater*, our beloved and venerable parent, will send forth sons, furnished for honourable and useful action in all the liberal professions, and in every distinguished walk of life. Let her grateful children never rest till this hope be accomplished.

It may be proper to mention, that the object which has now been recommended is not of recent suggestion. The late Chief Justice Parsons communicated to a friend an address to the public on this very subject, prepared by the late Rev. Mr. Buckminster. The Chief Justice expressed an unusual interest in the object, and observed, that a man in the last hours of life must derive great consolation from recollecting that he had contributed to its completion. The reasons of its postponement to the present time were the peculiar circumstances of the country.

These remarks are respectfully submitted to the friends of Harvard University, of an enlightened ministry, of free inquiry, and of pure Christianity. Let them be weighed with seriousness, and it is hoped, that they will awaken some interest in the best and noblest cause, which human benevolence is permitted to advance.

Note to page 319.

The following remarks appeared originally as a Preface to the English edition of Dr. Channing's "Sermon delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. E. S. Gannett."

"For rendering the following admirable discourse easily attainable in this country, we are sure we shall receive the thanks of those who may thus be led to read it. The name of its respected author is, even on this side of the Atlantic, a sufficient recommendation, and we should have left it to make its own impression, but for the occurrence of a passage, in one of the notes, respecting the English Unitarians, and Dr. Priestley in particular, which appears to us to contain a very erroneous statement, on which we must presume briefly to animadvert.

"It is by no means a fact that the Unitarians of this country 'may be considered as forming a political as well as religious party.' It is well known that our religious body contains individuals of every political party, and we have never shown a disposition to act together for any political object, except, perhaps, obtaining relief from penalties and disabilities affecting us in consequence of our opinions.

"If, upon the whole, we are generally found to be active friends of civil and religious liberty, we hope this is not regarded by our Transatlantic brethren as an unfavourable symptom, and implies no improper *mixture* of political with religious feeling.

"When we reflect on the characters of Taylor, and Cappe, and Lindsey, and Toulmin, and others, who have been distin-

guished amongst us by their learning, the value of their writings, or the personal consideration they enjoyed, we are astonished at the assertion of Dr. Channing, 'that the influence of distinguished individuals has not been favourable to a just zeal among Unitarians in England.' He speaks as if Dr. Priestley's were the only distinguished name we can boast, and we think he has allowed his dislike of some particular doctrines maintained by this great man, to bias his judgment respecting the tendency of his writings. It is extraordinary, that so zealous a defender of the Jewish and Christian miracles, should be suspected of a disposition to 'exclude the supernatural from Christianity,' or that one who valued his character as a natural philosopher, chiefly from the hope of its enabling him to serve the cause of revealed religion, should be thought to have imbibed the principles of those whose errors he so earnestly laboured to correct; and, whatever may be thought of his *constitutional* temperament, in zeal for divine truth and practical application of what he received as such, in moral sensibility, in the cultivation of pious and Christian affections, and in cheerful submission to the appointments of Providence, this eminent person has been seldom exceeded.

"When we condemn doctrines as chilling which we have never believed, we commonly judge of them from our own feelings respecting them, not from a careful consideration of their necessary consequences, or of their actual influences on those who have embraced them.

"If the doctrines of Materialism, Necessity, the suspension of consciousness until the general resurrection, and the exclusion of all *immediate* agency of the Deity upon the minds of men, do not tend to diminish our love of God, our trust in him, our sensibility to the motives of religion, or our confidence in its promises—which it can hardly be contended that they do—then, though they may occasion somewhat different feelings on some subjects from the more common opinions, they cannot with truth be termed chilling doctrines, nor are the believers in them found to possess less warmth of religious feeling than their brethren. The zeal of Dr. Priestley may well be termed enthusiastic, and if his piety had less in it of excitement and emotion than some persons desire, which might be more the result of

constitution than of particular opinion, we know that it was not the less uniform, or practically influential.

"But extended as have been the effects of Dr. Priestley's writings, and highly as they have been admired and valued, Dr. Channing has probably over-rated his influence upon the opinions of the English Unitarians. The doctrines of Materialism and Necessity are very far from being generally received either by our ministers or people, and are now most frequently considered by their supporters as philosophical truths, not having much *immediate* connexion with religion, or being proper to be inculcated on those who do not apply to metaphysical studies. Even the doctrine of the suspension of consciousness till the general resurrection, supported as it is by so many powerful arguments, and so many great names, can by no means be identified with English Unitarianism, being opposed by several of our distinguished divines, as well as by numerous individuals in our societies. As to 'what are called philosophical notions respecting prayer and divine influences,' we believe them to have made but small progress, and to be generally, whether justly or not viewed amongst us in the same light as by Dr. Channing himself.

"On such subjects as those that we have mentioned we cannot perhaps boast of much uniformity of opinion amongst us, but, agreeing in the grand principle of religion, we can here agree to differ; and we believe, that by those differences we lose nothing of our interest in religion, or of our fervour in its exercises.

"No doubt the cause pointed out in the last paragraph of the note which has called forth these observations, has had its influence amongst us, but we think it is no longer active, and that for some time past, the tendency has been towards increased attention to the excitement and cultivation of the religious feelings.

"We hope that Dr. Channing will see reason to correct his ideas respecting us, which have possibly been partly derived from our enemies. The just popularity of his own sermons in this country shows, that we are not entirely insensible to earnestness and fervour, and it would be easy to refer to abundant proofs that we do not find these qualities only in foreign works. To him and to the reader we are sensible that an apology is due for obtruding here these remarks and explanations. The former

must find it in the value we attach to his good opinion; and th latter, however little needing our assistance, will perhaps accep of our anxious desire to do justice not so much to our brethren whom, though they suffer not by fair comparison with any othe sect, we would gladly see increasing in religious warmth and sensibility, as to the memory of one of the wisest and best of men—of their connexion with whom, we think, all Unitarians ought to feel proud."

THE END.

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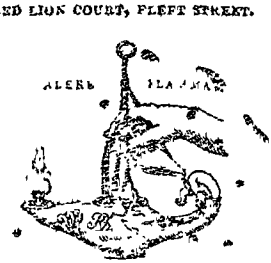

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